



P O E M S.

EDITED BY

S I D N E Y R U S S E L.



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DEDICATION.

To My Sister Cornelia,

WHO, in my various labors in literature, has cheered me by the constancy of her affection, her sympathy, and faith in me, and who is more intimately associated with the blissful period of childhood (in which our growth was twin-like for intimacy) than any other,—this volume is gratefully dedicated.

August 3, 1858.

P R E F A C E.

I do not know whether these Poems breathe a higher inspiration than the majority of compositions of a poetical character which have been issued from the American Press heretofore. But I do know that the poetry of America ranks infinitely below that of Greece, Italy, England, Spain, even of France—for France has produced a Béranger—and marks no era of this nation's history.

True, we are young as a nation ; but not too young to have produced a great Poet. A country which has given birth to so great a moral hero as Washington, to so great a sage as Franklin, and latterly, to so great a statesman as Webster, need not despair of its Poet. We are undoubtedly the most intellectual nation since the time of the early Greeks, and promise more than any which has existed since them, (our very so-called “self-conceit” springs from a consciousness of this fact: the English develop this quality in an almost equal degree ; the Greeks, the greatest nation, in a mental sense, whose record is preserved to us, did in a

paramount one.) In our government, our immunities, we are, above all others, the people to foster genius of every grade, and in every department of *αἰσθησις*.

Why may we not achieve in poetry what has been already so nobly achieved in sculpture? There is appreciation for inspiration, and material for culture in our country. The American people love knowledge, and lavish the wealth they are indefatigable in acquiring, oftener in ministering to intellectual wants than any others. Young minds have access to the literary master-pieces of all ages and nations, for the cheapness of every species of literature in this country is proverbial.

We want a universal Poet. Would that we had a Goethe, who would sing both lyrics and epics for us equally well. A great Poet must be able to enter into every mood of men's minds: he must possess not only strength, and sweetness, and calm, and exhibit dignity and ease in versification, but vast insight into the passions of man's nature, and power of original conception (that faculty commonly called invention) must be his. His inspiration must be in Reason as well as Imagination; and, in truth, to excel as a Poet, he must be a philosopher: poetry is the essence of all high philosophy.

We have no Béranger to write our songs and odes; we have no Tennyson nor Browning. Our Poets reproduce too much of the spirit of the age, which is narrow and sordid in its achievements and aims—one of shallow tastes

and material triumphs: an age, to use the words of another, "of spiritual discomfort, and wanting in moral grandeur:" a greater than he has typified it more clearly under the form of Mephistopheles in Faust.*

We have little thorough discipline; little of the lofty Calm of inspiration in our native verse;† little of that serene wisdom which speaks so plainly of power Titanic in its purpose and sweep, if it chooses to reveal itself in full strength: the repose of Goethe covering the grandest powers of action, the smiling aspect which haloed the gigantic heroism of Jean Paul, and the lofty indifferentism of Wordsworth, are alike unknown among us. We believe, indeed, with Carlyle, that it takes centuries to produce a great Poet; but again we recur to the idea of Washington, and believe in our country's capacity to give birth to greatness, and to discern the heroic beauty of a gifted soul.

We know with Matthew Arnold, that the conception and delineation of a great action constitutes a great poem; but who have we among us who possesses anything of the discipline of the Greek poets; of Goethe's calm; or who

* Carlyle calls him (Mephistopheles) "an impersonation of modern worldly-mindedness." Review of Goethe's *Helena*, Carlyle's *Miscellaneous Writings*.

† Bryant and Longfellow have done much to defend us from this charge; but we want yet stronger spirits than they, and owning a wider and higher inspiration, to make us truly great in a poetical sense.

practices in life and works as well as praises in song, his sublime, "unhasting, unresting" philosophy?

The extraordinary triumphs of our countrymen in plastic art, prove that great conceptive power is not wanting among us to give birth to Poems as great; and we know that it is not for want of opportunities of culture. Our mechanical triumphs interrupt the repose necessary to the Poet above all others; but the very power exhibited in this direction may prove the greater broadness of our mental constitution.

For myself, I have but to say that I have had, as yet, no reason to suppose my claims to poetical distinction paramount. Poetry has been with me the practice and solace of a self-isolated youth: I early learned from experience, that nourishment for the faculty was not to be found in what is denominated "society"—that the frequent presence of the worldly chilled it, and dimmed the ardor of its inspirations; that patient study, a self-acquired discipline, and mental repose, were necessary to high conception or valuable execution.

I might assume an apologetic air, and say that this small volume of reflective and descriptive Poems was mostly written while the author was yet in his minority: but believing that this statement would affect their reception as little as their merit, I refrain; willing to let these early efforts make their own appeals, and stand or fall as they are worthy or the contrary.

Whether or not I have done anything toward infusing a more correct taste, a greater calm, a more expanded and vigorous spirit into our literature in these Poems, I leave the American Public to decide.

August 3, 1858.

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P O E M S.

Wie das Gestirn,
Ohne Hast,
Aber ohne Rast,
Drehe sich jeder
Um die eigne Last.

GOETHE.

Unter tausend frohen Stunden,
So im Leben ich gefunden,
Blieb nur eine mir getreu,—

* * * *

Und von allen Lebenstunden
Wird nur die, wie meine Wunden,
Ewig heiter offen stehn.

NOVALIS.

———Φίλος δ' ἦν ἀνθρώποσι·
Πάντας γὰρ φιλέσκειν.

Ἕθνηρος.

(XV)

P O E M S.

HEBE AND GANYMEDE.

LET flow the amber wine
While my soul flows into thine,
Ganymede !
To my grief I'll naught concede !
I, Hebe, will not stoop
From my goddess height to weep, nor will droop
For that I,
Tripping, fell along the pavement of the sky,
With the shatter'd cup of Jove,*
Who had offer'd me his love,†
Where huge Olympus high
Enthrones himself, in calm god ecstasy !

* I have given to Zeus the more modern Roman appellation Jove, because I think it better suited to the spirit of my poem than the Greek *Ζεύς*, even though it may seem to some minds to create a confusion of mythological ideas.

† This allusion to an amour between Zeus and Hebe may be thought fantastic and monstrous, on account of the near relationship of the goddess of youth and beauty to the father of the gods, it being recorded in mythology that she was the daughter of Zeus and Hera. Without, however, taking into account the thousand excesses of Zeus, my fancy may be deemed pardonable, simply because it is a fancy, and any one who chooses may, by the aid of a little imagination, ignore the idea of any relationship existing between the separate idealisms of the poem.

I know that Hera wept
While the Thunderer me kept
At his side,
And that she doth now rejoice, and deride
At my fall :
I'll not fall into tears
As she, jealous queen !
For my mishap appears
A god-send to have been !
Gave me all
All my joy, love, in thee ;
Ganymède I see !
Whom the gods gave to me in the place
Of Jove's smile,
His awful, beneficent grace !

Pour the wine, love, swift pour !
In the nectar depths work
Strange lethargies—lurk
There to enervate Jove
In his wild deeds of love ;—
So be quick !
The Thunderer o'erpower,
And we'll take our sweet stolen sleep,
Where the pale naiads weep
By the calm blue sea's shore !
In the lilies and leaves
Full of balmy reprieves
For my grief !
And our strong love shall work evermore
To my soul, full relief.

Ah he falls !
And half calls,
Overcome by the wine,
For me—who am thine !

Clasp me, Ganymede, close, while I twine
My arms round thy waist !
So—bear me in haste
Forth—out in thy own—
And this odious throne
Leave for aye !

Ah ! sparkle they out
All the worlds here about
The Mount's brow ?
It is late, as we swiftly pass
O'er the bright, elastic grass !
Ganymede, bear me up—
For me, too, the wine cup
Overcomes !
Oh, to lie

Under the sky,
All alone in thy arms !
Ah, let not Jove wake,
Our grand purpose to shake ;
If he comes in his might,
Should hurl at us, and strike,
Then, naught would to us be
Our strong immortality ;
But a curse in our woe—

Oh, embrace me not so
Ganymede, in thy pain !
I shall stifle again,—
As once in the fumes of Jove's wine !

So—the cool, silent sea !
My strong passion, and thee !
Ah, couch down
In the flowers,
Lay me prone
'Mid the showers

Of the dew to refresh,—which shall soothe
 my distress,—
 And thy triumphant tenderness !
 So, gods, would I lie,
 Drinking draughts of joy and love eternally.
May 4, 1857.



MORNING SONG.

How blushes forth the summer dawn !
 What rosy radiance breaks the dusk !
 The spirits of the night are gone ;
 And lily's scent, and sweetbrier's musk
 Go up to kiss departing feet
 Of who have pour'd the nectar'd dew
 From misty chalices, and sweet
 Caresses given the whole night through ;
 Making its pensive moments fleet :
 Spirits of shade, oh gratefully
 The flowers repay your ministry !

Sun rays make golden fruit appear
 'Mid summer foliage massy glooms :
 The laborer sings his song of cheer
 Toil bent through clover-field's perfumes ;
 The dew broad glistens in the trees :
 The climbing cypress' scarlet stars
 Reach passionately, in the breeze,
 Toward where the mild clematis draws
 Closer her snow,—and conscious sees
 Her bolder love, flush'd with desire,
 Toward her bright pureness still aspire.

The cattle's yearning low is heard :
And many a glad, expectant cry
Sounds from the grove ; each waking bird
His idyl utters joyfully.
The golden stooks a field rejoice
In drooping brilliance of their plumes,
Long, silken, beamy : hark ! the voice
Of reaper and of maiden comes
From thence : each lad near his sweet choice :
Ere twilight glooms dispersed, they hied
To see the sheaves with flowers were tied.

August, 1858.

THE PAST AND PRESENT.

A REVERIE.

AGAIN that past my eyes would greet !
The godlike friend they syne did meet ;—
The sparkling rime beneath his feet :

Where stood he with erected head,
November heavens above him spread,
The evening planet overhead :

With folded arms and steadfast gaze,
Outlook'd he far into the maze
Of coming times, his soul could raise

Out of their distance for his view :
What he had done—what he should do—
The past and future fancy drew.

I look upon his steadfast brow :
Like smooth-hewn marble it doth glow
In whiteness, yet the soul doth show.

The conscious mind sat there enthroned
As though its power creation own'd,
And he a sovereign height had found.

* * * *

That day is past—where is he now,
He of calm mien, and lordly brow ?
Him a remorseless fate doth bow.

The might of intellect was naught
To gain the lofty ends he sought ;
And now misjudged, he wanders out

To gain his bread by trivial means :
That soul no more o'er thousands reigns :
To paint his wrongs his tongue disdains.

Who were his slaves awhile ago,
Have now forsook him, since he's low,
And circumstance no more doth bow

To frame his ends—but rather he
Submits with what grace he haply
May have left of prosperity

To its rude claims. When high raised, he
Look'd out upon the man he'd be,—
His soul borne up triumphantly,

Did then that soul his doom foretell ?
And ring within the warning knell
That made such calmness in him dwell ?

Strange calmness—then I thought it strange,
And wonder'd why his soul would range,
Restless, though fix'd—and long'd for change.

What wrong philosophy did wreck
That soul that nothing vile could check,
That but of loftiest things would reck?

Perhaps a seraph slow borne down,
Told him the arch-sin was his own
That tempted Satan to dethrone

The power above him, and install
Himself the monarch over all :
I think ambition made him fall.*

Yet 'twas a godlike sin,—and he
Was to his ancient self most true
Herein—I wonder if 't may be

That this is the eternal stake ;—
That if we fall, our fall partake
In grandeur, of what we forsake ?

Yes, this is nature's, reason's law :
We still must be, anear or far,
At peace with God or waging war,

* * * "I see not but they may think it glorious, and conceive that all are paltry to them, and that they are the great and mighty ones of creation. For what verily is all this self-adulation and dreaming of vanity, but another torturing demon which exalts itself over the glorious parts of human nature, and turns them into degradation. * * * * * Had Satan not been vain-glorious, he might still have stood." (See *Edward Erving's Orations of Judgment to Come, Part VII.*)

The same in innate spirit might :
And though ambition wreck'd him quite,
His power is with him in his plight.

I mourn he is at enmity
With fate, that smiled so graciously
Awhile ago, and fed his eye

With such clear light :—his haughty mien
A well-blent sweetness glow'd within ;
Which fitted him while it did win.

Well,—yet perhaps his adverse fate
Will change its face, ere 't be too late,
And keep his birth with ancient state !

Rejoice my soul ! I scarcely think
God will crush out this living link
That show'd so fine, nor let it sink

To rust in darkness—but will use
Its metal strong—from mouldy dews
It hath contracted cleanse 't :—I muse

With quietness upon the thought ;
The theme an added grace has caught,
Which always on my soul hath wrought.

A calm repose it lendeth me
To know with prophet certainty,
That God doth let no good thing die !

March 16, 1857.

RECOLLECTION.

WHAT halcyon days that summer show'd !
Days full of labor, and wise greed :
What reaching out to fill soul's need,
What broad revealings of a God !

What intense life amid the trees !
What splendors in the steady air !
Or, if the west would not forbear,
What joyous sweetness in her breeze !

What noble prospects from afar,
Where heights on heights serenely tower—
While clouds above them smile or lower—
Beloved of ether, moon, and star !

What miracles my sight descried,
What tints transfigur'd in the flowers !
How long and passionate were the hours,
Till, pale with rapture, the day died !

Alas ! they're past—no more to be—
Those morns of promise,—glowing noons,—
Those broader, golden harvest moons,—
Those nights for love's deep ecstasy !

Yet still shall labor fruitful be,
The soul yet larger stature own :
Kind fate shall set thee on a throne,
The throne of her Tranquillity.

August, 1858.

A PAGE FROM LIFE.

MEINE Welt war mir zerbrochen,
 Wie von einem Wurm gestochen
 Welkte Herz und Blüthe mir;
 Meines Lebens ganze Habe,
 Jeder Wunsch war mir im Grabe,
 Und zur Qual war ich noch hier.

* * * * *

Ward mir plötzlich, wie von oben,
 Weg des Grabes Stein geschoben
 Und mein Inn'res aufgethan.

NOVALIS.

A SHADOW fell upon my youth—
 Which would not anchor by the truth,
 But only look'd upon the ruth.

A poisonous cloud ensphered it round :
 And swept its hopes were to the ground
 By bitter winds, of wailing sound.

In darkness chill it long abode—
 That soul that erst God's glory show'd
 Forth so supreme, in happier mood.

At length it meditated wrong,
 And ponder'd in its darkness long,
 With throes of anguish, deep and strong,

Whether or not that "unknown bourn"
 Were not the best for souls forlorn,
 So toss'd with agony, and torn.

Perhaps some river might be fix'd
With kind oblivion featly mixt,—
This state and the other lying 'twixt :

Should it not court such wave, and be
Plung'd thus into immensity—
No more in sluggishness to see

(A state induc'd by misery)
The world revolve perpetually,
Bringing no light nor good to be ?—

And ending so, in endless sleep,—
Devoid of dreams, its dark to keep,
Still half apprised of half a sleep ;

But quite annihilated, find
No seed within of deathless mind,
Or infinitude to souls assign'd ?—

Or wisdom, men attribute to
Him whom they teach our spirits grew
From his own fullness, just to do

His perfect will, or disobey
The laws he gave to show the way
Our souls should walk,—erect in day ?

No answer could my soul obtain :
Revolved again, and yet again,
The question was in hopeless pain.

The truth ignored, I could not see
With clearness ; or sufficiently
To aught inform my misery.

In my remoteness sad I mused ;
And having comfort quite refused,
Sat sphinx-like, and could not be roused.

* * * *

So brooded fixedly my soul
Until it heard a murmur roll
Of faintest music, to console.

It seem'd to rise from far away ;—
And lure my spirit forth to stray
Where it would lead harmoniously.

But no ! my soul refused to heed :
The music ceased not to plead,—
Though I would nothing yet concede.

At length the sweet tones drew more near,
And murmur'd softly in my ear
The tenderest hymnings, fine and clear.

I turn'd to question them, and say
“What strange phenomena are ye ?”
But fear'd the ecstasy would flee.

All suddenly I glancèd up,
As if to pluck—some god did stoop
My gaze aloft,—nor quaff'd his cup

Because of my amazement—when
(Attend too—follow fleet my pen,
As I rehearse the things I've seen ;)

He glower'd above me gloriously
To note the wondrous mystery
That struck upon my dazèd eye !

A group of flowers that look'd like saints,
With mystic, luminous depths, and tints,
(Such the Archetypal flower-gem paints,)

Like heaven's expanse, lit by moon's beam,
Stood out erect, and seem'd to dim
The glory round wherein they swim !

A tenfold halo compass'd them,
And back reflected from each gem,
Crown'd each with separate diadem !

While gazing dazzled on the show,
A voice spoke sweetly, soft, and low,
Amid the music,—through its flow :

“Look at them, through the gloom and teen
That's held you, acting as a screen,
From all the wondrous time that's been :—

From the great Present's tenderness,
That seeks to energize distress,—
And blow God's breath through all the stress

Of stern experience' angry roar—
So thou'lt land safely on the shore
Thou thought'st to reach, now, nevermore.

Look through,—out of this fiendish dream—
This lethargy of hell—where gleam
In hues of heaven, the flowers supreme.”

I look'd indeed :—and there they stood,
Each cloth'd in heavenly flowerhood :—
And then 'twas that my mazèd mood

First recognized in each of them
A sweet, familiar, cherish'd gem,
Belovèd of my childhood:—deem

Ye that I could forbear a tear,
To see such ministers anear,
My spirit's fainting state to cheer?

Memory acknowledg'd each of them
A former friend;—each radiant gem
That shone upon its dewy stem,

I'd loved in years whose sacred dust,
I'd ne'er thought these worn feet to thrust,
These wandering feet within, but must

At sight of such strange messengers :
Who woo'd not as the worldling does,
But as an angel ministers.

A breath from Paradise did pass
Full o'er them, and to my embrace
They sway'd them soft, with stirring grace.

Such animates the Loving One
That gods look down from heights upon,
And smile beneficently on !

The vision melted all my soul,
Which did in soothing deluge roll,
Of tears, its griefs, without control.

Until with strong up-mounting wings,
My new-born spirit sweetly springs
To greet the dawn of better things !

*

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So, bath'd and purified in tears,
 Brought forth by memories of the years
 When life was pure,—my spirit wears

Its olden guise with added grace :
 Where Faith mature doth hold a place,
 And Earnestness you plain may trace :

They saved my spirit from despair :
 And woo'd me to the height from where
 I look adown—sighing now ne'er.

April 29, 1857.

THE HARVEST VISION.

O'ER my soul, sweet, sweet
 Comes a picture gliding—
 A fragrant field where mowers reap ;—
 Gleaneth goldenly the wheat !
 Shining grain doth busy keep
 Sickles that ring
 When the hone they fling
 Across their sheen !
 To cut the proud grain,
 Which utters no shriek of pain :—
 And the master riding
 Softly o'er the rustling leaves,
 Where are gather'd together the gleaming sheaves
 (In a field near by,)
 Which stand clear 'neath the early morning sky,
 And are crown'd in their state with the blue corn-
 flower,

Which the mowers bound on
In the rosy dawn
As the stars were fading, and night's pale gloom
Yielding to day;
Which broke out in beams
As the flowers they lay
Round the golden sheaves,—and bath'd them in
streams
Of delicate amber light,
Which abolish'd the lingering dusk of night !

Golden-green, or impurpled the land
Stretcheth away afar;
'Neath the broad sunshine—and the ruddy band
Of husbandmen ply many a busy hand;
Or young lassies labor in groups in the barley;
There one in her radiant gleaming hair doth stand,
Enchanting in graces that clothe her so fairly !
On the milk of lilies,
And blood of roses,
She seems to have fed !
Ah ! the sunshine has led
Her to seek a spot where the shade reposes;
Where yonder beach
Shoots out stately arms, verdurous, which
Her gentle desire would reach !

See her hands white as lilies
Among shining ears !
Softly, deftly, plies the maiden;
Glowing piles she rears
In the sunlight,—and the harvest
Grows beneath her hand !
Fair as Eve ere she left Eden,
Doth the matchless creature stand !

Heaven did surely send this maiden !—
 In her form inclosing
 An angel's soul,
 To shine through in its soft reposing,
 And make less blessed ones who gaze upon her whole !
 ———, 1857.

A PROBLEM.

By woe the soul to daring action swells,
 By woe in plaintless patience it excells.
 SAVAGE.—*The Wanderer.*

In the reproof of chance
 Lies the true proof of men.—
 Troilus and Cressida, Act I., Scene 3.

'Tis strange how often misery gives birth
 To finest products of the intellect !
 No Rassalas ours, if Johnson had not been
 Bowed 'neath the grinding heel of poverty ;
 He always said he wrote because he must,
 And to gain bread—a mere necessity,—
 And so it prov'd—his pension slack'd his pen :
 No Defensio ours, if Milton had not been
 Beset by foes political, and fir'd
 To wage war with his pen with potency ;
 And thus produc'd a work whose elements
 Shall outlast, by long ages, all that strife
 Of transient nature which gave birth to it ;
 Poor, evil persecution ! but the means
 Of raising such a structure to the world !
 Had Homer not been blind, no singer he
 Would have been haply, of the deeds of men—
 Lone, wandering minstrel, made by lack of sight ;

His soul apart in grand ideals mov'd,
And potent memories of the earlier days,
For we have no good reason to suppose
This poet wrote himself his epic down
I' the Greek it stands in—though true, taken down
It had not been, if Homer had not sung;
No soul but Homer's was there to create
An epic like it—so he sang his song
Heroic,—wandering, to chance listeners;
Who it preserv'd most probably; if we
May build hypotheses upon a myth,
For some assert Troy's fall is mythical;
Though the grand poem's soul unquestion'd stands:
No Vicar, ours, of Wakefield, if the man
With his clear poet's soul, had not been forc'd
To pawn his tale to keep a roof above
His ill-us'd head. Thus fares it with the great!
And in compulsory works their recompense
To the world for such misuse; which prompted them
To assert their claims in native majesty
And godlike power—that after-ages still
Might view their works in humbleness, and learn
They were no fools, though persecuted as
The vilest are—but here I curb my pen.

March, 1857.

TO MY SISTER.

ALL day long been conning Greek;
Growing weary as day closes;
As on strain of music free,
Plenitude of harmony,
On your thought my soul reposes!

Sweetest sister, shall my toils
In their high result ye yet make
(When my fame's grown large, name great,—
End come of my Work and Wait,)
Ever prouder for my sad sake ?

Divine prophecy !—'twould be crown
Of my future—more far than all !
If to martyrdom befall
Such return—well worth to fall,
Gaining from thee that we love call !

Thou dost in a mystic calm,
Such as cherubs know, abide in !
I would enter it within—
Make thy soul my nature's twin—
All-possess whom I confide in !

Often when my poet senses
Build their tuneful mystery,
As the wind o'er vibrant harp-strings,
Rush I toward thee on swift soul-wings
Drawn by dæmon potency !

Blessed thou art, serene, high rais'd ;
Heaven of thine no storms betide in,
Lake star-lit on mountain's height—
I would find such haven to-night,
For my wearied soul to ride in !

Thou dost love me ! wilt rejoice
O'er the dear one ? take delight in
Men's loud praise—heart-tributes sent
To me in my banishment,—
Echo soul-deep plaudits I win ?

Worn or fired I've turn'd to thee—
In my reveries, joys, aspirings ;
When my name consorts with fame,
It shall still glow near thy flame :
I expire while thy soul yet sings.—

For thou'lt shame the warmest world-praise
By thine own response—I, dying,
Shall behold thy face lit by
All thy nature's harmony !
While thou dost rejoice—I be free !

November, 1857.

TO EVENING PRIMROSES.

BLOW, blossoms, blow !
Expand your paly gold :*
The sun is low !
Earth's softest dew
And sweetest silence
Lovingly intense
Solace you !
You who the sunbeams never knew,
You who the stars do view :

* Some two months after this poem was written, I met accidentally, and for the first time, with Bernard Barton's verses, "To an Evening Primrose," in which he applies the expression "paly gold" to this flower ; but as it is not an uncommon one, and is so peculiarly descriptive of the appearance of these blossoms, and finally, as this is the only coincidence in the two poems, (they being altogether dissimilar in spirit,) I have retained the expression which was original in its application, in both conceptions.

You whose charms only twilight may behold
 By her mild ray;
Or thoughtful gaze astray
 From world's highway,
And only Night in ecstasy enfold !

 In childhood's hour,
Ere yet the poet's power
Self-own'd, had spoil'd with consciousness the bliss,—
 O'er your delicious hues
 And fragrancy
 I rapt would muse :
My breath would hush its play
 As sunset died,
And your pale, regal pride
Burst forth in sympathy with night's array !

 Then I, with joy elate,
Saw through so tender-hued
Your beamy purity,
And reticent your mood—
 Touch'd with divinity
And tremulous,—yet glow'd it not less passionate !

 Ah, those summer nights—
When the broad heavens were cloth'd in halcyon state !
When I, too careless to be passionate,
 Too eager to be sad,
Hung o'er ye, flowers, and knew your beauty strange !
 And recognized a fate,
Which to interpret, vainly I essay'd,—
Round which broad wonder, ever foil'd, play'd,
As still I sought to solve the mystery
Your petal'd presence offered to me :
Thinking, how little, that the flowers rehearse
The fateful burden of the universe !

Where the most rapturous strains
 Hold hidden grief-refrains,
 And minors low
 Pierce deep the current of life's solemn, yearning flow.

E'en yet to me ye minister delight !
 And as I wander in the new-ris'n night
 Through this large garden,—silent memory
 Makes your sweet sight,
 Seen by starlight,
 Grateful to me :
 Your peerless purity,
 Greeting my manhood's eyes,
 I bless, and as ye rise,
 Blooming in dark,
 Like inspiration on the gloom of Time,—
 Your starry guise
 I thankful mark,
 And your divineness praise in rhyme :
 And had I power, would give to ye,
 Sweet flowers, immortality !

September 25, 1858.

THE FIRST GRIEF

Of a youngling straight and slender,
 Saddest scene doth memory render ;
 When I stood
 (Infanthood
 Scarcely fallen off) to see
 My dead father solemnly
 Lying cold,
 Stately roll'd

In the cloak he used to wear
When he smiled so high and fair !

Gazed I sadly on that form,
Cold, and white—calm did deform—
 Straight and still
 There—until —
Sighing lone, I question'd it
Whether it was right or fit,
 That my father
 Would not gather
Me into his arms, though I
Stood and wept there silently ?

Long my questioning remain'd
Heeded not—but echo gain'd
 In reply ;
 While that I,
Sadly lying near him, moan'd
That my father had enthroned
 On his breast
 That chill rest
'Stead of me his daughterling :
Still he spoke not anything.

Forth at last I hopeless wander'd,
Musing on the moments squander'd
 At his side,
 Who'd deride
Only,—by the silence kept ;
Answering not—"perhaps he slept ;"
 I thought, "so
 Back I'll go :"
Ere long I had there return'd,
There I sat and inly mourn'd.

What a placid, silent sleep !
 All his senses it doth steep ;—
 Not a breath—
 “Is this death ?
 Did they tell me so erewhile
 Sorrowing—without a smile ?
 Not a streak
 Paints his cheek !
 Fix'd, majestic, pale and cold,
 Death it is doth him enfold !”

So an anguish overwhelm'd me o'er,
 Big, and strong, and surging sore,
 With wild din
 Me within—
 Would he never speak to me,
 Mount me gently on his knee,
 Nor beguile
 With his smile
 Any hours for evermore ?
 Grave and earnest,—he that wore
 Such a grace
 In his face !
 God ! 'twas my first agony—
 No such other let me see.

May 4, 1857.



THE PARTED LOVERS.

“Put off thy sadness, little lass,
 And taste the vivid life of June !
 Her gracious reign is over soon,
 The golden days like meteors pass

“In swift succession. Rise, and set
Thy feet in flowers; no longer grieve—
Thy sorrow-darken'd aspect leave,
And make her spirit thine own yet!”

[*Maiden, standing at a window, replies as in a reverie.*]

“I see the summer sun shine broad
O'er fields traversed by busy plows :
To Nature's peace my spirit bows,
My soul doth own the smile of God !

“Nature Him speaks ; yet I would see
Another, human presence there !—
Him they call dead—but who is fair ;
And sometimes yet doth speak to me !

“Once when I left him in his life,
To visit other hills than these,
To read his poems 'neath new trees,
His soul with thoughts of me was rife.

“He cried to me in words like these :—
I have them written in my heart,
As well as those the paper brought
From his dear hand my bosom bears :—

“ ‘Return, my love, sighs fill the hours !
On grassy slopes I round me see—
Grateful shade-blotches rescuing me
From heat—the happy loves of flowers :

“ ‘Oh, Rose, sweet nature shows me thee !
The azure hills that bound my view,
The netted vapor on the blue,
Recall thy sweeter looks to me !’

“ So sang my poet, and I came.
Now death has taken him away—
Yet I behold him in the day,
And all night’s silence holds his name.

“ My God, this nature Thee declares,
Let it more clearly show me him !
I know he is no angel dim—
No glory faint his forehead wears !

“ I know him here I shall not see—
That he’s a spirit strong in heaven ;
But be his presence to me given,
And let his soul discourse to me !

“ More grandly I would him discern,
In all around, in air, and earth ;
I think there is of power no dearth,
Nor pity in thee, God !—I mourn—

“ Would see him visibly. Oh, show
In all thy beauty, him, that I
May recognize him ’yond the sky ;
Oh, let me know him ere I go !”

June, 1858.

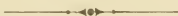


SONG.

PATTER, patter against the pane,
Thou slow-falling, pearly, April rain !
Each grass spire
Spring green and higher ;
For with gentle force falls the April rain,
And the sweet, sweet spring has come again !

The busy old mill
 That so long has been still—
 In winter's frost wrapp'd,
 Now works with faint hum borne over the plain :
 The near streamlet which napp'd
 In chill quiet, now courses in freedom again,
 Unchain'd by the kindly, slow-dropp'd spring rain !
 Run, Chanticleer, in thy bright-plum'd gear—
 Take shelter to save the feathers you wear
 From dullness or stain
 In the April rain !
 The cattle are lowing far down in the rain,
 And the sweet, sweet spring has come again !

Let man's spirit rejoice
 At the season's voice ;
 Let the soft spring rain
 Abolish Doubt's anxious reign,—
 Dissolve his old pain :
 Let his soul sing in fullness of joy again,
 At the sweet, soothing sound of the April rain !
April, 1857.



SPRING AND THE POET.

THE young spring loved a poet, and she said,
 "Come, gifted one, and let me crown thy head
 With the first flowerets of the year,—I spread
 "O'er the fair bosom of thy mother earth ;
 Come thou, whose soul of sweet dreams hath no
 dearth,
 And thou shalt be my love ; and so give birth

“To finer poems, (which my charms suggest :)
Among the much-be-prais'd ones they'll be best :
See how my budding breasts split my bright vest !

“And blush not ! thou shalt be my love, I say !
Thou may'st thy head upon my soft lap lay,
And dally with my beauties all the day !

“Come, poet, I will deck thee—I will set
Upon thy brow the crimson rose dew-wet,
And purple languor of the violet !

“With leaves inwoven of the ivy vine,
Its supreme whiteness (with the eglantine,
For sweetness join'd,) I thus will bind and twine !”

October 2, 1858.



APRIL.

ALL nature wears a halcyon mien—
The fresh spring smells are in the air ;—
The sky's sweet sapphire shows serene,
Above my spirit's strong despair !

Spirits of sunbeams, scents, and shades,
Wing dark and bright this April day,—
Which seems to have its sweetest moods
Reflected from the coming May !

Rouse thee, my soul, shake off thy gloom,
Step out into glad nature's round !—
Thy human sympathies bring home
To her—what's lost in her is found.

March 13, 1858.

GOD DECLARED IN NATURE.

I.

THE fool indeed it is who no God sees ;
Earth shows Him in her every miracle—
Immutest, greatest works of Him doth tell,
In clear, sweet, universal harmonies !
Who gave their emerald tint to grass and leaf,
Its yearning azure to the steadfast heaven,
Its riant, golden aspect to the sheaf,
And buds their rubies where calyx is riven ?

II.

Who made this globe revolve in light and shade,
Spread a sky dome abroad so vast and fair,
Gave its calm splendors to the summer air,
And mountains with their feet in ocean stay'd ?
Who gave the violet its passionate dye,
Who dropp'd its odors in the bursting rose,
Pois'd clouds, that rainbows might bestride the sky,
Gave the far hills their Beulah-like repose ?

III.

This spirit all-pervading, who but God ?
Who all informs this vastness with His breath ;
What is this nature ? what is life ? what death ?
But His divineness shown by Contrasts broad ?

August 1, 1858.

“MANY infallible grounds of wisdom * * * lie dark
before the imagination and judging power, if they be not illu-
minated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesy.”

* * * * *
“And a man need go no further than to Plato himself, *
* * who in his dialogue called Ion, giveth rightly divine
commendation unto poetry.”

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S *Defence of Poesy*.

“WHEN Nature's hand, in endless iteration,
The thread across the whizzing spindle flings,
When the complex, monotonous creation
Jangles with all its million strings :
Who, then, the long, dull series animating,
Breaks into rhythmic march the soulless round ?
And to the law of All such Member consecrating,
Bids one majestic harmony resound ?
Who bids the tempest rage with passion's power ?
The earnest soul with evening redness glow ?
Who scatters vernal bud and summer flower
Along the path where loved ones go ?
Who weaves each green leaf in the wind that trembles,
To form the wreath that merit's brow shall crown ?
Who makes Olympus fast ? the gods assembles ?
The power of manhood in the Poet shown ?”

GOETHE'S *Faust* ; Brook's Translation.

THE POET'S SOLILOQUY.

SHALL me, whom God such powers did give,
Despair then hold in thrall?
Who had I thousand lives to live,
Could yet employ them all

In study of the master minds,
In travel, yearning sage,
In animated toil which finds
New object for its rage

In every work of God's (designs
That all my mind engage,)
In lofty thought at Nature's shrines
Through endless pilgrimage?

"Great God!" I can with Werter say,
"Shall I whose faculties
Wider than most,—might mankind sway,
In gloom my being freeze?"

Must sad despondency be mine,—
Mine, who was made supreme?
While duller men decry my rhyme—
Are blind to genius' beam?

Must I disown the cheerful sun,
The world me outrage too—
Crying, "this one's example shun,
He naught of good shall do!"

Ah, Powers who orb my being round,
Both rapture and lament
Are heard throughout the strain ye sound
Athwart my banishment !

I read these in your luminous eyes—
Your demon forms to me
Embody strangest influences
Unrest, calm, potency !

You are the beings who mould life—
Who toss the wearied soul
From blandest rest to sternest strife—
Through bliss and woe me roll !

I yet shall triumph—false might fall—
Poetic powers reign !
Ah, cold, vain world, ye are not all,—
Though ye have made my pain !

October 3, 1858.



A MODERN CLEOPATRA.

A KINGLY man men call him : he is mine !
My soul doth crown him royally with fire :
I'll bend him to my will—then say, " I'm thine !"
Fit is he for my wild untamed desire.

Yes, I shall conquer ; steadfast though he be—
The arrows of my passion pierce his calm !
His front shall lose its hauteur bow'd to me—
He shall for kiss of mine resign the palm.

My eyes shall lighten on him,—standing there
Strong and unconscious now : elected he
To fill my nature's deep abysses—where
The dearth has long look'd for him yearningly.

High and serene he smiles—a column cold,
Lit by the sun : who'd think the being there
Shall lie in my embraces—in the fold
Of arms swept now by midnight of my hair?

Hush heart ! be quiet thou imperious will !
Let my blood's currents less tumultuous flow—
Compass with subtle care thy purpose : still
Wiles subvert wisdom as of old ! and know

Thou'lt stand in need of thy imperial power,
Oh soul, to attract, secure such prize as this !
Win by proud coolness ; and repress thy dower
Of fiery might—though fainting for his kiss :—

'Till thy pale, peerless rage has triumph'd : then
Unloose the gyves self-bound about thy heart—
Awe by force while thou fascinat'st, lest when
Naught but thy passion's seen, undone, he dare de-
part !

December, 1853.

TO MY BIRD ESCAPED.

Ἐρασμὴ πέλεια,
 πόθεν, πόθεν πέτασαι;
 πόθεν μύρων τοσοῦτων,
 ἐπ' ἡέρος θέουσα,
 πνέεις τε καὶ φεχάζεις;
 τίς εἶ; τί σοι μέλει δέ;

* * *

τὰν ὧν ἔδω μὲν ἄρτον,
 ἡφαρπάσασα χειρῶν
 Ἀνακρέοντος ἀπ' αὐτοῦ:
 πῖν' ὃν ἐμοὶ δίδωσι
 τὸν οἶνον ὅν προπίνει.

ANACREON'S *Ode to a Dove.*

Αἰ, come back, come back,
 Beautiful one, who wert my solace in
 Drear hours! what trailing beams shiver thine azure
 track?

Thine unloos'd wings
 Seem down-weigh'd by some fragrance, or despair—
 Oh, foreshadowings
 Of harm to thee, and lonely grief to me,
 Thy wild flight brings!

Thou art no carrier-dove, chance seen, of whom I may
 Say, "whence com'st thou?" for thou dost wing away
 From me who was protector, lover too,
 Of thy soft life! aimless amid the blue
 Thou courset. Ah, come back, come back,
 Retrace thy daring track!

Dost thou disdain thy poet's loving hand,
His tender care, and his admiring eye,—
That thus thou dost rejoice from him to fly?—
Exploring, as thy rapturous wings expand—
Transfigur'd in the sunlight solemnly—

That upper land
Of rose and gold, violet and silver cloud
Toward which thy pinions wend?

Though I have fed thee—brought to thee fresh leaves
Crisp with the dew, and shared with thee my bread
Of whitest wheat; and the sweet crystal grains
Thou lovèd'st; wilt thou leave me? Who bereaves
My heart? Not thou, priz'd so, and watch'd and fed
From mine own hand; thou dost not cause these pains.

So—wilt thou not return,
Although I mourn?
Thy bright wings cleaving, instant poising, gone!
And thou hast disappear'd!

And night has come: and I forlorn
Have look'd my last upon thy glancing eye
And golden neck uprear'd,
And crest; and plumèd wings
Unfit for flight ambitious 'mid the starry things.

——, 1858.

NIGHT AND SONG.

RING out, oh, soul-harp, silent long—
Ring out a pæon sweet and strong !
Midnight repose broods grandly o'er
The sleeping grove and moonlit tower :
Speak to the heavenly sisters nine,—
And they'll descend to weave with thine
Their heaven-tun'd strains; and join'd will be
Divine and earthly symphony !

Lo, spirits swift are on the wing—
And bending low, their wings they fling
Across my lyre, and wake its tones !
Through the still air a clang resounds !
And all the power that long hath lain
There hidden, wakes at th' touch again !
Oh, what a full, triumphant song
Wakes Pan his native woods among !
As, starting at the unusual sound,
He rises—seeks its source around ;
And “the yellow-skirted fays,
Leaving their moon-love maze,”
Fly toward the strong celestial strains ;
Panting to find the sounds that wak'd such heavenly
pains !

Night bends her awful brows to hear ;
While silence' pulses far and near
Proclaimeth the creation round,
Mov'd at the grand and wondrous sound !
At length it droppeth into night,—
We'll hear no more such heavenly tunings dight,

With import far too wonderful for those
Who understand not night's speech, nor the throes
Of such divine brain-births,—which only they
Who can call poesy their own, with full truth, may.

December, 1856.

RELIGIOUS ELEMENT ACTIVE IN ALL AGES.

—— “Reverence, the divinest in man.”

CARLYLE, *Sartor Resartus*.

“Which are indeed naught else
But the protractive trials of great Jove,
To find persistive constancy in men.”

Troilus and Cressida, Act I., Scene 3.

'MID the rolling of Olympian thunders
Throned serenely were the gods of old.
Where the awful vision the gloom sunders
Men adoring gaze, meek, rapt and bold.

Grand imaginings which gave the ancients
Forms to worship,—too our souls illumine;
Urge not now to gaze toward heaven with patience,
Show us angels ere we pass the tomb.

Deity yet lends to nature glory,
A divine Presence we discern;
For the early sages Shiloh's story
Lived not like us late enough to learn.

When amid the strife of life we languish
 And its burdens make our spirits pine,
 We remember joy succeeds to anguish,
 One doth prove the other ; twins divine.

Still the gods are greater than their shadows,
 We will whisper to our souls to hope
 As when harmonies more glad rose ;
 With blind Fate undaunted bravely cope.

His expectant and immortal nature
 (Zeus, Christ beholding) man still wears ;
 Through the old time and the new the creature
 Is unchanged ;—celestial yearnings bears.

Naught unmakes him : reverent, aspiring
 Is his mein whatever creed he view ;
 Purer virtue than he sees desiring
 Loftier being ; nobler deeds to do.

Pain oft racks him ; but his front he raiseth :
 And would e'en among the stars enthrone
 His humanity : in grief he praiseth
 Themes diviner than his life doth own.

——, 1858.

SONGS.

I.

Now in the spring of life, and nature too,
Sweet Poesie with rapture tunes her lyre !
Long silent, but re-echoing once again
Its old-time heart-strains with its old-time fire.

The birds are singing in the budding trees ;
The wild flowers spring in every wooded dell ;
The blossom'd wealth of spring is in the air,
And bursting on the trees in tender swell.

Come, oh, my soul, and form a pæon for
The season and thy vigorous estate !
Rejoice in this fair May, and that thy God
Hath late inform'd thy life and made thee great !

Fear naught, oh soul, but labor on in love,
Constant as in this nature's course ; and bring
More noble fruits unto heaven's sacred shrine,
From out the treasure of thy human spring !
——, 1856-57.

II.

The slender grasses lift their spires of green,
And cut the brooding air :
The spring bends low o'er earth her azure wing,
And trails her garments fair,
Ethereal and shadowy, o'er the earth,
That the most sweet and delicate scents give forth !

Oh, we do greet thee, spring ! thou herald of
 Long, tender, coyful days,—
That shed'st upon our hearts the balm of love
 And mak'st me sing thy praise,
Who many days have sigh'd to welcome thee,
As the sweet messenger of joys to be !

What odorous mazes throb their gay young green
 In soft life of the air !
The flowering-almond wreathes its wands serene
 With fragrant blooms, which bear
A perfume so intoxicate with spice,
That they our nostrils constantly entice.

Soft ! listen to the murmuring multitudes
 That throng the jocund air ;
What bursts of melody make glad the woods—
 Vocal the atmosphere !
Nature rejoices,—thou, my soul, rejoice,
And in harmonious accord with hers blend thy poetic
 voice !

March, 1857.

III.

The apple trees bend with their weight of blooms,
 Softly down, softly down,
And the air is fill'd with sweet perfumes,
While the sky expands with no cloud glooms,
 To cross its blue with a frown !

The tender grasses wave in the sun,
 At salute of the sweet spring breeze,
And the brook doth in merry cadences run
O'er pebbles, like pearls in their bed of dun,
 'Neath the shade of the willow trees !

All nature doth glow in a perfect grace !
 We could worship her as she doth stand
 Forth, transfigur'd in this her waking face,
 Wearing naught but of heaven the grand impress
 Where God's smile lit and rests to expand

Into full-fledg'd ecstacy ere long, when
 The earth reels 'neath a load of flowers ;
 The gods shall send down gems in showers then,
 And a thousand roses its crown again,
 It shall make, this brave world of ours.

May 4, 1857.

MUSINGS.

I STAND in the ancient porch, honeysuckle wreathed,
 And see in the eastern dusk the full moon's broad
 gold ;
 Then turning, at every step the vine's scents inbreath'd,
 In the conscious west I the star of love behold.

The zenith shines pure of star gem, meteor glare,
 Or even the lively rose of the maiden west,—
 Still blushing in memory of sun's kiss, (she doth wear
 In form of the star,) left on her mild front ere his
 rest.

Oh, who shall attain to calm that above us lies,
 Forever intact and grand in the heaven's heart ?
 None, none : for the men we on earth account most
 wise,
 Cannot cope with this nature's power, and cannot
 impart

To their lives her inspirèd mood—as great ones would
 The ardent souls who hold with her communings
 high—
 Never yet their worshipful love's intensity could
 Pierce to the depths of her forceful serenity.

Because it is God who informs her—who looketh
 through
 Her vastness. This peerless earth, so a sage has
 said,
 Is here “the garment we see Him by;” and who
 Shall dispute a Goethe? Yes, Nature with God is
 wed.

July, 25, 1858.



THE LOVERS.

I WANDER forth; the dreary north doth face me as I
 go;
 I bend me low, but cannot so keep off the drifting
 snow;
 The length of way before my feet doth damp my spi-
 rit's glow.

My pace I check, but stronger flock down mazy
 sweeps—my face
 Is gloom-veil'd—blind I grow and chill;—the wind
 doth roar apace:
 I have a weary way to go or ere I reach the place.

But now fruition fills my heart—it thrills at what I'll
meet
When reach'd my goal ;—the mental picture urges on
my feet ;
Hasten ! oh, haste—she waits for you with look of
welcome sweet :

Her hair in sunny coils doth lie now swept against
the pane—
The thought of what awaiteth me doth drown the
wind's refrain—
I shall be happy soon, nor take this dreary way again.

So, high aloof, my grandsire's roof—how fair it shows
in storm !
The massive, olden architecture cleaving through the
gloom :
And Alice—ah, her blushes cease in watching if I
come !

Truly, my sweet, my joy's complete !—thou restest
'gainst the pane—
Art gazing out—the matchless triumph in thy features
plain,
For thou hast caught a sight of him thou lovest unto
pain !

Ah, meet'st me love ? Fair waiting dove, that kept-
est watch in storm,
To catch a sight through gathering night, of thy own
lover's form—
Thou did'st espy me quickly, sweet ! sight's keen
where heart is warm !

I also thought of thee ; nor so, love, felt the storm :—
 I trace
 Thy past anxiety still in thy tender soul-lit face—
 But thou attain'd, my spirit stands entranc'd in Love's
 sweet grace !

Winter, 1857-58.

 RECOMPENSE.

“ I, through whose soul the muses' strains aye thrill !
 Oh ! I do feel the spell with which I'm tied ;
 And though our annals fearful stories tell,
 How Savage languish'd, and how Otway died,
 Yet I must persevere, let whate'er will betide.”

KIRKE WHITE.

THE poet is ever prophet,—
 This refrain both stern and glad,
 Speaketh truth of many poets,
 And the cruel use they've had.

The meaning of our brother
 Is shadow'd forth so clear,
 We long to express in music
 (Musings born of our low cheer.)

The twin thoughts which arose beside it,
 Mating themselves with this,
 Which recall them sweetly and sadly
 Out of the soul's abyss.

And this thou did'st feel, oh, poet !
 This thy prophet insight saw ;
 Thou knewest the seer unheeded,
 Thou knewest the world's hard law.

Thou sawest thine inspirations,
The fruits of thy gifted soul,
Pass'd unseen and untasted of mortals,
Though thou lived'st for them to toil.

But when calmly his breath has departed,
Time the spirit of mankind wakes
To tenderest pity and love, as
To sorrow for past mistakes.

Years pass, and his spring-time has blossom'd ;
And gloriously we behold
All the leaves and buds of his genius,
In perfect beauty unfold.

Thus the Autumn of misconception
Doth not forever last ;
But the poet's hopes are realiz'd
When his century is past.

And the sorrow that stung his senses
And lent sad force to his song,
Passes with life in haloes—
Which enwrap his memory long.

So light is born of the darkness,
And good springs out of the ill,
And ever Autumn is tending
The blessed Spring to fulfill.

And "world's cruelty" oft worketh
E'en while genius suffers eclipse,
A better apprehension
Of the poet's apocalypse.

July, 1858.

ALCESTIS.

To-DAY heroic nature shall behold
 Humanity heroic—waiteth she
 A soul's grand triumph hush'd and consciously—
 Calm expectation doth the earth enfold.

The Old World sunshine watchful floods the scene—
 The blue waves of the tideless southern sea
 Flowing in long swells shoreward tranquilly,
 Lap Grecian shores,—enring her islands bland.

Vivid unflickering trees stand o'er-arched by
 (The ripe figs falling with a gentle sound,
 Their golden fragrance shed upon the ground,)
 The purple splendors of the fixed sky.

Oh, woman, now thine agony is laid !
 Admetus shall not die,—but only thou !
 Love's still and mighty strength doth gird thee
 now ;—
 Triumph thou wilt—and thy soul be display'd !
August 4, 1858.

REFLECTIONS.

EACH thought slow, sweet, like chime doth fall
 And seeming glad, doth glad me make ;
 My calm reflections rythms take
 Grows meditation lyrical !

How steady is the summer air
With the weight of its splendors broad !
How calm the earth—how full of God—
What massy glooms of foliage tower !

Each flower, and leaf, and placid stream,
Each tranquil hill that glows afar,
Each sunbeam, sky-glow, steady star,
Each river lying in a dream,

Gives birth to soulful melody
Within me—tenderness and power
Their smiles and raptures break in shower
Of notes triumphant, ne'er to die !

Oh, who can fathom poet's soul,
Its insight, inspiration broad ?
None, none :—what passeth out from God
Its harmonies toward him must roll :

Its trials, yearnings, strife and bliss
He reads like plainest writing show'd ;—
Its minors, rapturous majors broad—
Heaven's sympathy he knows is his.

Demoniacal powers him sphere—
Grand forms who watch his steady course—
Who'd darken horror with their curse
And lighten heaven when smiling clear !

They stern compel him, or they crown
His toil with their grand gaze, when he
Has won a place triumphantly
Among the sons whom fame doth own !

August 22, 1858.

TO N.

WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM.

ALL gifts of human and divine
 Enring thy happy spirit :
 And may thine earthly pathway shine
 With smiles that saints inherit !

* * * * *

Let thy young soul grasp the beauty
 All of good that life doth hold
 And transfigure it in duty
 Into blessings manifold.

November, 1857.

TO M.

WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM.

YOUR nature's tender buds uncloseth
 Serenely—let them court the light ;
 (Nor know the chill and gloom of night)
 Where life broad, constant sunbeams throws

To rouse them into blossoming ;
 Full-orb'd perfection may they win—
 Be ripen'd in a purpose twin—
 Earth's good heaven's gain foreshadowing !

November, 1857.

THE SWISS PEASANT'S LAMENT.*

A GLOOM doth circle me to-day—a dreary ring of
gloom—

Though nature smiles so strong and gay, she lately
spoke my doom;—

This nature robb'd me of my child!—my time for rest
shall come.

My child, I cry, my boy, my Clare!—with spirit-lighted
face—

The worms do nestle in thy hair, the sods o'erarch thy
grace;

And yet I would, my boy, that I could that drear rest
embrace!

How soft and strong doth pour the sun around me as
I stand!

How sweep the hills in stretches long beneath the
heavens bland!

The earth doth seem, this glad May-day, my praises
to demand!

Thy mangled form was borne along; I see thy features
now!

Thy sunny hair that stream'd the bier, thy lofty up-
turn'd brow

Fix'd in high calm of death, as when they dug thee
from the snow!

* Over the grave of her son who was killed by a fragment
from a falling glacier.

Oh, why, thou azure beaming sky so fair, remorse-
 lessly
 Spread over us to show the heavens to which we are
 not nigh?
 Thou mak'st me mourn, bright earth, and wish that
 dying I could die!

Alas, my strain is never heard; my woe is echoless!
 Ceases its chant no tiny bird to mark my near distress,
 Nor any sunbeam flooding me takes any ray the less!

Alas, great Nature, dumb thou art, as if thou held'st
 me so!
 Thou dost not feel my poignant smart, nor soften at
 my woe;
 Nature is always mild and sweet, although she lays
 us low!
Winter of 1857-58.

TO EVENING.

Oh, tender seeming eve—still-eyed, serene,
 Clad in a dew-mist, breathing scents like prayers!—
 Not on thy grave, sweet front is sadness seen,
 Thy presence cross'd is by no adverse airs!

Thou com'st to bless us!—Twilight is thy throne:
 The roar and jar of action now is laid:
 No noisy energies thy reign doth own,
 And the world's busy rush of work is stay'd.

High, radiant clouds of softest shifting dyes
 Float in the zenith ; smell of fruit and musk
 Lurks 'mid the shrubs and trees. How fair the skies,—
 How sweet a rose beyond the beech's dusk !

Now is pale mist veiling the hillside's green ;
 Massy and dark the summer foliage shows :
 Though all the vale's a blot, tall groves are seen
 Set 'gainst the back-ground of the sunset rose !

The bird's faint twittering fills the evening air,
 As home they wing them to their leaf-hid nests,—
 Eager to cover tender younglings there
 With downy softness of their sheltering breasts.

Now brighter hues are fading in the west ;
 Deep violet flushes only greet our eyes ;
 Though gravely calm and fair, warm glows thy vest ;
 So kindling lights on lover's brows arise !

August 4, 1858.

THE TRIO.

*[A poet, his wife, and child, are seen in the shade of high rocks
 near the base of a wooded mountain.]*

POET.

How fair is the prospect from where I stand !
 Look, love, do you mark its serenity ?

WIFE.

No, Robert, indeed no ; I do not see
 The beauty your voice so commends to me ;
 A dark band of shadow enrings us three !

POET, (*musingly.*)

We live in truth in a goodly land !

WIFE.

I see not the noble view you so praise.

POET.

But, my Jane, look away from this prospect dun
Afar, to that sweeter, more halcyon one,
Where the golden-gemm'd meadow borders run,
Where cows low gently and feed in the sun :
On those plains I think I could spend my days !

You must see the prospect unfold, I think,
For there, Jane, still further, behold the stream !—
(Look, now, as I point, and follow its gleam :)
Where the wild birds sail, and dip, and scream ;
Where the cattle splash in the noon-day beam,
Flinging a pearly shower upon its brink.

WIFE.

So far ! Your keen vision I will not mock.

POET.

And furthest of all where the meadows end,
See how grandly the shade and sunshine blend
On the mountain side, where the flocks extend
In long lines—and there, see the shepherd wend
Slowly beside them in scarlet plaid frock.

WIFE.

Ah, yes—you've reveal'd it all, love, to me !
 Lift up the boy—let him take in the view ;
 His youth must be nourish'd with beauty too
 Of this Nature—'tis thus you'd have me do
 At home, books, pictures, noble statues through—
 Let him muse on its rapt tranquillity.

High lifted, he reaches your stature now ;
 So—place his tiny, pale slenderness high,
 That his father's grave, eagle-piercing eye
 Inherited,—clear may the scene descry
 While he inly broods o'er it tenderly
 There, while seated upon the rock's grim brow.

October, 1858.

OF AN EVENING.

THEN I did woo, from the clear page outspread,
 Sweet verse, by fading gleam of day, or read
 A bit of some old genial prose instead.

'Till 'mid the evening's hush, bright Venus' star
 Peeping through roseate clouds which could not mar
 Her steady shining, raised my thought to her.

At last a thunderous rythm caught my ear,
 Just as I look'd to see her disappear
 Behind black branches of the beech—so, hear

The song my heart sent forward to her sight,
 Which now show'd fairer in the coming night,
 While the sad south herself in storm bedight !

Venus, who float'st in purple sea of sky,
Beyond which golden shores of cloud do lie,
Still glow divinely upon mortal eye—
O, do not die !

The south wind breathes sinisterly this way,
And round her dark front forked lightnings play ;
Console us for the loss of the lov'd day ;
And star, oh stay !

Let thy warm, mild, inspiring beam still show
More glorious opposite Night's stormy brow !—
Oh, to unpitying Fate, pray, do not bow
And leave us now !

Ah ! vanish'd ! One ray streaming up again !
Gone !—clouds pursue her swift, while prone the rain
Falls 'gainst my casement—hush thou demon Pain
Thy weird refrain !

I leave the storm-swept casement suddenly :—
But at a late hour, when the wind is high
And sounding out its yearning midnight cry,

I look abroad ;—and see the moon supreme,
Traverse the blue serene with stainless beam,
While Venus' flight and the storm seem a dream.

September 30, 1858.

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

A BROW of altitude Shakspearian :
 And yet it was a woman's—say a child's ;
 For she was but sixteen : yet like a seer's
 Her life was full of wisdom ; and her talk
 As measur'd sweet as though her soul had drunk
 The wisest things of books, and in its own
 Fullness, self-orb'd, deliberated, mus'd,
 And wrought in calm.

* * * * *

Next time I saw her, 'twas her birthday morn ;—
 Some months had pass'd and she was seventeen :
 Such beauty I had not conceiv'd—her face
 Was like to Hera's in its luminous calm,
 Athene's in its strength, and Aphrodite's in
 Its love ;—these regnant, classic silences
 All gaz'd upon me in her presence—there
 Those fam'd ideal triumphs had found life ;
 Their graces crown'd her triply, and should glow
 Immortal—for her soul gave birth to them :
 I lov'd her, yet did tremble to possess.

* * * * *

Last time I saw her that large brow was wreath'd
 With shining lilies—they were laid so close,
 Filling the coffin's head, as to contrast
 Vividly with the pure expanse they crown'd ;—
 Which own'd a deadlier whiteness—there she lay,
 Placid :—her seventeen years still radiant in
 Her hair's soft, coiling gold which veil'd her arms,
 Passing the mute, mute shoulders with caress
 So instinct with life-beauty, I could scarce
 Think it was Death, they swept so lovingly.

September 14, 1858.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

OH, immortal land of childhood, sweeping down a
 pæon grandly
 From your sunlit slopes of glory, and your rivers
 crystal clear,—
In my thought ye lie transfigur'd, spreading peacefully
 and blandly,
 Over-syllabled by mystic sounds the millions cannot
 hear.

Gaze I then on haloed roses, each grand tree like harp
 ring then does—
 Land for poet inspirations, dreams and visions un-
 defiled;
Yes, all undisturb'd by world-strife lie its pure serenest
 splendors—
 Land for idyls to be written in—an Eden to a
 child!

Still I look upon the vision—still I listen to the
 music
 Borne from where its borders send forth beams cast
 from its central heart,—
Dropping blessings on my later mood—the stern and
 melancholic—
 Through its vibrant spirit-voices, loftiest truths it
 doth impart.

There my youth from hand of God did calm receive
 its conscious blisses,—
 Still I feel the tranquil rapture which surrounded
 me those days—

Oh, I seem to see my father's form, to feel my mother's
kisses

Press'd on innocent child-lips ere they'd interpreted
world's ways !

Heaven play'd a gracious part there, for I was a child
of nature,

Serious-thoughted, and yet joyful with the mildness
of her face ;

Loved my nature—meditated—though not yet of poet
stature

And enring'd with visions wondrous as draw poets
from her grace.

Each new morn awoke my musings—heaven's warm
gold, earth's fragrant freshness ;—

As Eve's crimson, vesprous voices—all awoke my
soul to see :

Such companionship fail'd not to make necessity's
grim leash less

Felt, than if such commune had not freedom's es-
sence nursed in me.

Revel'd I in Nature's spirit ; largeness thence my spirit
drawing,

I grew older than my summers, while an infant's
brows were mine ;—

Their white innocence had gradual grown the broader
for my thinking,

And the calm, impassion'd worship which I felt for
things divine !

So existence grew more rapturous—so its nectarous
wine imbibing,

Pierced I into all life's mystery—had without the
strife, the bliss ;

Read its grand illumin'd writing—grew more vigorous
though subscribing,
And too, cognizant of many things which full-grown
poets miss.

One who read well men's souls, writeth that we aye
must lose the glory
As we pass from childhood's clearness into murky
manhood's state ;
And we know that as we journey far beyond its golden
glow, we
Hold a loving God's divineness less by sight than
grace of fate.
——, 1857.



THE ARTIST'S PICTURE.

AND then with instinct all divine
She wrought the picture, line on line—
Which soon look'd out with haloed twine

Of tresses round a regal brow
They crown'd as royally as do
Sunbeams the winter's domèd snow.

I gaz'd thereat with strong surprise :
From out those cavernous depths of eyes,
Where seem'd to burn a sacrifice,

I caught such inspirations come
I stood there gazing—always dumb
At the strange soul did them illume.

A light ensphered her head serene,
Which seem'd to radiate from between
The glowing coils that crown'd the queen.

The burning orbs back flash'd this blaze
And seem'd the steadier for my gaze—
Full of deep, potent influences.

At length I turn'd to her whose thought
Its supreme silence forth had brought
In this creation ;—which had sought

My strongest sympathies to find
Its matchless grace and power combined
And depth of meaning to unwind.

(The artist here has shown her soul,
Her lofty aims have touch'd their goal,
And it doth burn indeed, as roll

God's harmonies about it, while
She worketh raptly without guile—
So did inspired prophets toil.

Her soul's a flaming altar, where
More sacred sacrifices are
Offer'd, than brazen ones e'er saw.)

She stood all pale, and gazèd too ;
But her smile's splendor round her threw
Soft beams, 'till she transfigur'd grew.

Her eyes were fix'd upon the soul
Which hers had given that simple scroll
Of canvas :—Power in aureole !

She saw a shadowing forth herein
 Of what her soul so long had seen
 In trance—its glory reflected shine.

March 14, 1858.

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN ON SHIPBOARD.

AH, sweet home, sweet home, thou callest me!
 Over the kindling sea
 Thy vision com'st to make the wanderer sigh,
 As on the ship's deck high
 Stretch'd, he doth watch opaline streaks, the sky
 Light, and the keel-cleft waters silently.

Thou call'st me! Vocal all thy beauties are
 Of thy dear lost one's name—pilgrim o'er seas—
 But who, as he just watch'd morn's dying star
 Yearn'd toward thine olden benedicites!

Beautiful rises it!—enring'd with sward,
 Emerald-green, fill'd with swaying crowns of flowers—
 Each one of which convey'd a meaning broad,
 Each summer to my unspoil'd childhood's powers.

Ah, there the Yucca lifts its peerless stalk,
 Wreathed with pure bells—magnificently fair!
 And my old playmates wander down the walk,
 And talk of me, and wish that I were there.

Ah, sweet home, might I see thee! Homesick heart,
 Peace, peace!—what shows now crowd upon thy gaze!
 For these vast majesties which circle thee
 Has not thy soul one faulty word of praise?

Only I see

A house with wings; swept backward by a wood;
And jasper cedars fronting it: they've stood
Aye so, unmoved; dark and of kingly mood;—
And I yearn toward them;—shutting my rapt soul
To the dumb glories of the vasty heaven,
And purple waters which around me roll
Mightily sobbing:—making in my ears
Sonorous music; with the minor strain
Too sadly prominent to ease my pain!

October 15, 1858.



JUNE.

BUTTERFLIES flash forth,
Hillsides are glowing!
Farewell, oh, cold North,
South winds are blowing!

Breaking their emerald bands
Flame forth the roses!
Over its golden sands
The light stream courses!

Shouted thy praise is, day,
By birds delirious:
What doth their hymning say
Of thy life delicious?

Heavens, like another sea,
Glow blue and mighty;—
Softly surge clouds, and die
Like crested waves free!

Clear melt the hills away,
Blue wed to blue air ;
Into the dome of day
Lifting up heads fair !

Blessings upon this June !
Gods laugh around us :
We know your spheric tune,
We your Elysium guess !

Evil's black pinions furl'd,
Naught ill discloses
Now when this brave old world
Is ablaze with roses !

June, 1858.

AN IDYL.

FROM noontide heats
The brook's shelter'd greenly ;—
Lying serenely
Where maples, and willows, and beeches press round,
Entwining arms o'er the moss-cover'd ground,
Where the wild deer leaps down
Drooping his antler'd crown—
Head princely crested, to drink.

O'er the emerald sward
Near its brink,
Two lovers pace—Ridgely and Maud :
She timid and fair as the deer,
Which often she'd watch'd, without fear,
Come hitherward,
Unheeding the maiden, to drink.

Happy are they !
Sweet Maud is fair :
Shadowy hair
Trails o'er her arms
Heightening their charms :

(But her soul is fairer than they ;

That the stars in their courses are less sublime,
Smiling forever in face of Time,
Than her spirit's pensive, steady shine
In the wood, or 'neath heaven's crystalline,
Angels would not gainsay :)

In softest waves and wildest curls
Passes her slender waist : like pearls
The dew-drops often gem those lengths.

Sweet thoughts broaden'd his brow :

On her cheek the rose and the pallor of love
Equally strove.

They wander arm in arm :
She stooping oft for paly flower,
Shade-nursed, and lavishing its dower
Of perfume on the wood's still gloom :
Naught may that gentle breast alarm.

Oh day, fade soon !—

The morn shall make the lovers one.

The mellow hour of the evening comes ;

Sweet day is on the wane ;

The cows slow-paced from the dasied lane
Came lowing content ;—while the cottage dame

As they came

Watch'd from her door :

Pastures stretch away—

By farewell light of day

Are seen ;—and many a wheat-field's tender shine :
 And near, the hives in one long odorous line
 Toward which the late bees crowd, giddy with wine
 Of the flowers,
 Letting fall their wax in powdery showers
 As they wheel
 In a rapturous reel !
 Her children, scatter'd on homely turf,
 Romp'd ; or standing agaze in groups around
 At the sun-god's ruddy sunset swound,
 Faces of reverie wear.

Then the lady wander'd from out her bower
 In this grand and lovely evening hour,
 For the Spirit of Beauty demoniacal
 Held her impassioned soul in thrall
 To all that was noble and magical !
 And to-morrow spoken the vow must be
 That raises the maiden to wife's degree.

* * * * *

I see her no more, nor would if I could
 In the dewy gloom of this ancient wood ;
 For the rapturous joy of motherhood
 Crowns with double halo her beauty fair—
 And she seeketh no more the forest's lair
 To muse o'er her fancies rare :
 Reality holdeth joys yet more fair
 Than those silent, brook-side musings were.

This brook lies away in the West ;—
 The mosses in which it is drest,
 The trees rear'd above,
 Are luxuriant growths of its soil :

And now, though you see
 No maiden pause there silently—
 The wild deer still bends
 The delicate ends
 Of his branched crown to drink,
 As erst when the maiden Maud
 Haunted its brink !

September, 1858.

THE PALACE OF NATURE.

CEIL'D by the endoming heaven
 Solemnly, blandly,
 With a grove of lindens riven
 By an aisle, clos'd grandly
 With the cedar—tree of trees,
 For the ensphering harmonies
 To roll round their cadences.

Palace mine in Nature's heart
 Above your scorning !—
 Which no need hath of man's art
 For its adorning,—
 Yet disdains not inspiration
 Of man's grand imagination,
 Not the artist-soul's creation.

Buonarroti's statues there
 "Night and morn" surrender :
 Leaving their Italia's air
 Its calm, blue splendor ;—
 Tower here amid my trees
 To inspire high reveries :
 They do e'en this Nature please.

Roses here aloft shall grow
Twining and climbing—
From cedar's base to apex show
For altar flaming :
And for incense below
Lilies shall broadly glow,
Lifting their regal snow.

Vast hills shall bound it in
Grandeur for dimness ;—
Distant, blue, and serene
In their divineness ;—
Royal, like forms in dreams
Where Zeus' forehead gleams
Alp-like, crown'd with Day's beams !

In undulations long,—
(Trees sunshine veiling
Fill'd with perpetual song,)
Clouds o'er them sailing,—
Meadows flow to their feet :
In emerald light complete
They go the hills to meet.

Nature aye be my retreat—
This spot belovèd !
Most sacred, grand and sweet
Of all that have movèd.
Through this aisle my soul shall travel ;
Ah, these lindens shall unravel
Many a doubt heart-sown by evil !

Through their grand stems I shall view
That flower-gemm'd meadow ;—
There fly my thought o'er dew
Sunshine,—fleck'd shadow ;—

'Till dreamy mountains lone
Send back to me my own
With heavenlier power and tone.

At cedar's base I'll pause
Morning and even
That I may send my vows
From thence to heaven :
Then shall your ruddy splendor,
Roses, wake memories tender,—
Lilies, you your sweets me render.

Those grand, dumb statues then
Eloquent showing,—
Twilight shall see serene,
Night, grander growing !
Then, 'neath the stars, I'll feel
Immortal visions steal
O'er me, for endless weal.

September, 1858.



THE EMIGRANT.

I AM weary—the long day's done—
Spent in felling trees in the sun :
Tired my limbs and sad my heart !
The grateful night will soon depart.

Sadly I sit me down to rest,
For the thin-streak'd red in the East,
At dawn, shall call me again to toil,—
Tho' sinews ache with to-days turmoil.

Yet I should smile ! my Jessie's here ;
Who left her Scotia loved, with cheer
To share my fortunes : toil doth she
But always in serenity.

Oh, yes, no sour regret doth she
Let me in all her countenance see
More than when seem'd our lives so blest—
When first love's power our souls confest !

A day shall come for fuller joys,
When of an age to assist, the boys
Have grown, who now climb round my knee :
The past held no sweet prophecy

Of them : and so the future, more
Blessings for us may hold in store : —
Stout be my heart, and strong my arm,
And God protect our cot from harm !

October, 1858.

THE CHURCH.

With a slender, upward pointing spire
Seeming to rise ever higher
Into broad-spread, regnant heavens above,—
Stands the structure of my love !

Oh, an apostolic grace
Clothes and sanctifies the place
To our view !
Unpretending and yet holy—
Sight to silence noisy folly
Breaking out from heaven's blue !

For it crowns a high-roll'd hill,
 And has sky for background, 'till
 You'd think't a vision,
 Coming on it unaware
 At hill-foot—to see it fair
 Set, 'bove derision.

* * * *

What peal breaks forth, what cadence swims around?
 Aloft the church-bell swingeth in the tower:
 I listen—loud doth mellow music pour
 From it: my soul feels rapture in the hour,
 And falls into a sweet abyss of sound!

Summer of 1858.



REMEMBRANCE.

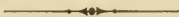
FROM MATTHISSON.

I THINK of thee when from the grove
 The nightingales discourse of love
 And their sweet symphonies me move.
 When dost thou think of me?

I think of thee at twilight's hour
 Where gloom obscures the fountain's shower,
 And steals the tints from every flower.
 Where dost thou think of me?

I think of thee with charmed pain,—
 Sweet hopes and fears alternate reign—
 And hot tears often shed like rain.
 How dost thou think of me?

Oh, think of me 'till blissfully
 We shall at last united be
 Under stars more propitiously
 To shine ! However far removed we be
 I'll ever think, love, only upon thee !
 ———, 1856.



AUTUMN.*

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL EPISODE.

THE leaf is falling ; and the sky is strange
 With equinoctial tokens : so I look
 On fiery splendors of the Autumn woods
 (Where birds chaunt plaints amid the rainbow'd
 leaves)
 Shadow'd by trailing clouds of swarthy hues,
 And the bright-petal'd Fall flowers perishing
 In the new rime,—and vividly recall,
 As visions of the vernal year sweep o'er
 The Present's changed aspect, all the joys
 Of my fair childhood, glowing 'yond the now
 Like statues pure, immortal grouping seen

* For the autobiographical tone of many of the poems in this volume, I have no apology to offer, and can only defend myself by reference to precedents afforded by some of the most splendid names in the poetical calendar, as Dante, Goethe, Byron, and others, whose example is sufficient to shelter the genuine expression of any experience, though I am aware that the very greatest æsthetical triumphs have not been achieved by this style of writing, and that those poets who have delineated their theme to the exclusion of themselves have produced the most magnificent results. So did Homer, Milton, Shakspeare, and the Greek dramatists and other poets.

Through rifted gloom black with the thunderbolt—
Or all ablaze with lightning. Oh, I liv'd
A charm'd and potent life in that sweet Past !
For then I read the heavens like a book ;
And drank their mingled clearness and repose
With such rapt longing, I seem'd satisfied !
Ah, then October's month was full of bliss !
For when I careless push'd aside the boughs
The season's splendors flash'd across my sight,
Hillsides and trees magnificently dight,
And standing up like various-color'd flames
Seen through a violet haze. The beech was fair :
The rotund-bodied apple-tree more gay
Than in the bright-ton'd robe May gave its limbs,
With fruity gold pendant against the blue :
Deep crimson flush'd all the high, cone-like tops
Of the familiar garden lindens, while
Their bases yet retain'd the accustom'd green :
The osage orange grove's deep emerald gloss
Chang'd to a brilliant hue which could not grieve :
The wind rung through the forest trees a march,
Or sung and swept over the garden ground
All bravely jubilant !—I felt naught sad
In all those vanish'd Autumns I recall.
I heard the sportsman's gun among the hills
Sever the silence ; and cock's dreamy crow,
And music of the evening kine bells wrought
A secret trance of rapture in my soul :
The golden brown of the far summits, then
With mellowing harvests, haunts me still ; for I
Thought them more lovely than when I'd beheld
Those sweetest hills lapping like emerald waves
In summer, when my child's Parnassus rear'd
The loftiest, fairest, smoothest-curvèd head
Among them : not less fair it look'd for mists ;

But stood as erst when I had nam'd it mine
Cloud-swept, wind-woo'd, belov'd of heaven and me !
Yet summers were divine—oh ! then the storm
Breath'd sweeter music than the birds do now :
I had grown older ; read, and thought, and lov'd—
But only Nature—with more passionate life ;
And drunk with lore of old mythologies,
And all my soul with sights and sounds aflame,
Beheld when sun in his noon strength rejoic'd,
Or his last beams transfigurèd the trees,
Great Pan abroad with Hamadryadès,
Leaping around him in strange ecstasies.
Then no grand phantasm faded into air,
But all my life was visionary ; and grew
Like a disembodied soul's for Beauty, Power :
I heard the passionate wind among the branches
Discourse most amorous melodies and sweet ;
The lilies open'd splendors to the sun
So purely exquisite, as woke my awe ;
I bound a wreath of subtil'st rainbow tints
Gather'd from all the flowers, across my brow,
And when June's roses fell in fragrance from
The parent stalks and found sweet graves below,—
I watch'd the purpling clusters of the vine
Mature their nectarous riches silently,
Rejoic'd by the hot kisses of the sun :
Through bowering shades I look'd on sunny heights ;
My chosen arbor nurs'd my wayward moods—
My contemplation's jealous privacies—
So thickly was it canopied with leaves,
Except where open'd out through vine-clad boles
Of giant oaks a place for entrance and
Views of all fair perspectives from within ;
From thence I could look out upon a scene
Of sunlit meadows stretching far, clos'd by

ild-outlin'd hills, all overshadowed by blue
summer heavens,—which own'd no lurid tint,
at lay becalm'd in rapture all the day,
ov'd of soft-fringed vapors;—their broad brows
o thunderous piles nor brassy fronts did show,
at, bath'd in glory of the summer sun
hich crown'd their foreheads oft with flamy beams,
ood girt with splendors 'till I left my bower.
men with delight I view'd the rack of storm
nd listen'd to the rhythms of the thunder;
or elemental strife rous'd the bold soul
youth to sympathetic ardors—then,
hen moaning winds had heighten'd to a gale,
pictur'd Neptune glad upon his waves
ardling in storm,—and every Triton knew
inding his shell joyous amid their spray
ith shrilly triumph:—on far coral coasts
saw old Nereus lift aloft his horn,
ereidès their spiral bugles blow
nd sound shrill-winding strains long-drawn and
clear,
ill, chill and keen; and the high vibrant notes
e finely penetrant still did not die,
ve with the raging storm and surging waves!
ow brave the sombre hues of heaven grew
e more I gaz'd upon their daring dun!—
nd saw the lightening blush athwart their gloom
owing their hearts, and crimsoning all the green
orizon trees. And so these summers pass'd,
ll'd with deep musing; ere my soul had nurs'd
thought of toil. But autumn is my theme.
e mid-year season gone,—the Fall return'd:
ound my childhood verging upon youth
nd first ambitions rampant in my soul:
ook'd abroad and look'd within, and said,

“What matters it if worlds proclaim my fame,
Or if my own soul, and the angel’s faces
Illumin’d with high wisdom, only it
Acknowledge?—I can bear to be unknown
(Yet all the while I yearn’d for recognition)
On earth, when heaven already says, ‘Thou art
Gifted of God, our brother; if neglect
From men be thine, endure it meekly—yet
With highest mien of love: if unsought praise,
Still meekly and still lovingly: ours is thine!’
I am a poet, whether grosser men,
False-reckoning, count me none, or whether they
Confess the truth with reverence and love:
My sweet and lonely childhood full of dreams
Never reveal’d to mate, while my rapt soul
Mus’d in its silent, serene solitude,
Proves it to me through memory—the Now
Through million glories self-conceiv’d and seen:
I know it, oh, my God! and I may wear
Unhidden of conscience, kingly bearing aye.
I will give birth to works which shall contain
All nature—comprehensive, luminous:
Their matchless strength and scope shall stamp them
great,
Full of clear proofs of immortality!
Into the boundless universe I melt
And find myself in her wild majesty,
As in a vast congenial element:—
I comprehend her largeness and would clothe
Her truths in noblest guise of Poesy.”
Where are they now, those visions of my youth?
Where are those hopes that scal’d the topmost peaks
Of visionary endeavor? Where that youth
Which girt its brows with Fame’s large coronal
Of flame?—and spoke impetuously of Power?

Now all my soul is vocal—but what sounds
Utter imperiously their burden dark ?
A plaint—a wail, rush moaning mightily
I hear—and sadden'd Nature looketh on
As erst I did on her, with sympathy :
But both our moods have chang'd—my low estate
She fain would comfort, but can only mourn.
A thousand memories crowd,—I have but voice
For two ; and sing them in the minor strain :

Long ago,
I heard the long, melodious, liquid flow
Of flute-strains in the halcyon summer eves :
Now, while pale autumn grieves,
I know my brother wanders full of pain
And desolate, about the home again,
Where his aspiring youth was wont to wake such
strain.

Long ago,
Before the earth grew dark and I knew woe,
I heard a grand, sonorous voice intone
Great Milton's vision lone :
Now, while those cadences no longer flow,
I know its gloomy fellowship with woe—
And weeping, wake to hear the bitter North wind blow.

Come, Spirit of the Past, and bury me
Deep 'neath the honeysuckle flowers I lov'd
(Coral-hu'd, dewy, fragrant with the Spring)
In my sweet youth ! Ah, haste ! and lay me deep
Amid their loveliness—so my lorn heart
Shall gather calmest comfort. Not too far
Let lilies blow around my grave's deep bed,
Waving white splendors pitying o'er my rest.

Say ye, "it is not time—not yet,—not yet!"
 And why "not yet?"—cold, phantom-like, and pale,
 My hopes all stand aloof—and I see naught
 But funerals in the sunshine : and I know
 These are no phantasies ; the very heaven
 I look upon and say,—the words upsurge—
 "Oh, azure depth of sky, thou smil'st upon
 My heart as erst!—and thy vast depth is full
 Of my wise childhood's dreams—and now I feel,
 Having attain'd to manhood, and the sum
 Of life's responsibilities, aw'd by
 Thy calm, divine, unchangèd aspect." So
 Down-gazing with this balm upon my soul
 I scan the earthward prospect—and 'tis peace !
 Is equinox then past ? This know I not ;
 My musings measure not the flight of time.
 But all the storm is laid—the scene most fair,
 Rosy with Autumn's mist-wreaths ; a soft, warm,
 And many-color'd halo ; while the hills,
 With the broad river flowing at their feet,
 Seem in united grandeur to express—
 Emblem the advent of a great Repose !

And why not gloom and sadness, change and death ?
 Oh, Poesy must see all sides of life
 To be true poesy :—Calliope's pale
 With viewing accidents of Epic weight,
 E'en while she smiles victorious over all
 To think of how the good is always great,
 Absorbing ill. Melpomene is stern :
 Why not ? "For what," we ask ourselves, "indeed,
 Is tragedy, but portrayal of these,
 Disaster—death—with just this difference,
 That they are grander in the poet's hands
 And more impressive than the facts in life ;—

He using all the agencies of Dread
With such godlike intent, judgment and skill—
And more felicity than nature uses—
As to produce a mightier result
Than most men's death-beds on the minds of men.
Yes! I am glad to see both sides of life :
And know my poems, should I write such now,
Shall have completed souls in them for this.
This pause of thought is perfect—I'm content!"
And now the wild sweet bells of evening clang
Out in clear chorus. Sound they not to me
An earnest of the future deep and strange?
Speak they from towers—discoursing in the wind
Inspir'dly to me; and now I see
An angel soft descend amid their chaunt
With divine mildness: and, "Angel," I say,
"Kiss off my tears!" Her wings o'ershadow me;
The tokens of my mourning disappear;
She breathes the name I wept o'er as I sung,
And all her prophecy is bright with hope!
At last she taketh flight, and I look forth—
And though the Autumn leaves sound solemnly
On harp-strings of the wind,—the pale, serene
Gloom of autumn sunsets fills the West.
To this content I cannot say "'Tis vain!"
Or, "Is't a dream?" or, "'Tis a phantasy!"

September, 1858.

EXTRACTS FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.*

* * * *

OH, thou, New England!—how I long'd to view
 Thee in thy grandeur stern, thy native charms,
 Thy far-fam'd beauty, ere that joy I knew!
 Fancy portray'd thee; and my spirit warms
 Still, as the recollection time disarms;—
 (Yet oh, I found reality had shrin'd
 Shows far more potent than thy unreal forms;)
 How oft I pictur'd to my ardent mind
 The new, enchanting prospects there I thought to
 find!

And I have seen thee!—where his days began—
 The land that nourish'd him deplor'd, my sire,
 Who as his boyhood sprung into the man,
 Bodied thy spirit as he did respire
 Thy breezes;—yet I seeing did inquire
 When aspects lofty, grave, and sweet, and stern—
 Where thousand separate beauties blent their fire—
 Met my delighted eyes at every turn,
 If loveliness so varied sprang not from Fancy's urn.

But landscapes that in vivid splendor shone
 Mirror'd within, yet still existent round
 Forbade the thought, and nature claim'd her own;
 Said to my heart—"Behold! what does surround
 Thee, rest in; thou shalt surely then be crown'd

* Subject, New England.

With lasting pleasures—naught is there denied
 Thee to enjoy ; Fancy's gay realm is found
 Ignoble by the contrast with my pride ;
 With full appreciation be thou satisfied !”

Faintly my mind had drawn what was in store,
 For all thy charms no prophecy could dare ;
 My enchanted vision asketh now no more ;
 And I will drink in draughts of purer air,
 Surrounded by these sights sublimely fair !
 A full, involuntary offering bring
 To shrine of song, and lay it humbly there ;
 Soar on Imagination's tireless wing,
 And in my sweetest strains this matchless land will
 sing !

I crown me with the earliest rose of June
 And snatch my harp, careless of who gainsay ;—
 Now when the nightingales are all in tune,
 And we have just bid farewell to the May :
 Come, Calliope, and inspire my lay !
 Smile on me, Truth, as I thy charms declare !
 Let every word reflect thy heavenly ray ;—
 I rather would thy benediction wear
 Than any gift of Fame's—such never perfect were.

* * * * *

How gloriously the summer morn has risen !
 The sky was never half so brightly pure
 In its dark loveliness ; nor light clouds driven
 With half such gentle force o'er the obscure ;—
 Melting away in azure, while they lure
 The steadfast gaze to rest upon their forms !—
 Angelic messengers they seem with sure
 Purpose to waft, without a thought of storms :
 Ah, their soft, silvery wings are lost where ill ne'er
 comes !

* * * *

A fair and goodly scene arrests my gaze
As onward still I journey ;—now is seen
The springing grain ; it o'er the hills displays
Its slender burnish'd leaves of golden green :
Their long and graceful lengths with sunny sheen
Rustle and wave like pennons in the air ;
No army's front so gracious ere has been ;
Mild is the scene ; I fain would linger here
Where scatter'd the sweet corn-flowers smile, upspring-
ing near !

The summer day is drawing to a close :
Nature spread out in passive beauty lies ;—
And seems the emblem of a great repose
As before eve's cool reign the daylight flies,
And twilight clothes the heavens in deeper dyes :
Softly the stars steal out—the mountains swell
Grandly and dark ;—their summits in the skies !
And from a village near, the evening bell
Tolls solemnly—I think it is a funeral knell !

* * * *

And then to ancient Salem did we hie ;—
Where in the old time there did much abound
Monstrous beliefs of pure absurdity ;—
Where Witchcraft rear'd her horrid head ;—and
round
Weak, wretched souls was thought her spells to have
wound,
And brought dire scenes to be enacted there,
'Till the land groan'd 'neath crimes—in blood half
drown'd ;
And Superstition foul, her fell reign o'er,
Sank before Reason's light, we trust to rise no more.

The fine old city with its antique cheer,
 Its dwellings ancient, venerable trees,—
 One scarce can realize while gazing here
 That aught but Peace ere brooded in the breeze.
 (Naught but the quiet beauty round one sees.)
 Ah, whence did come the miserable thrall
 That bound deluded souls in wilder'd maze,—
 When vicious toils seem'd to environ all
 And slavish, fearful souls in hell-bonds to enthrall?

Yet not in vain the tide of human blood
 Flow'd darkly on the execrable hill;
 The murder of these guileless ones has stood
 A warning to New England's sons—and still
 The record causeth many an earnest thrill
 Of indignation in the nation's breast:
 Writ in the people's heart, it ever will
 Give birth to justice, hasty deeds arrest;
 He shall be shriven who stands of ignorant sin con-
 fess!

* * * * *

But now a potent presence calls us on!—
 The swift car speeds too slow for our rapt mind:
 Ah, we have read of, and have mus'd upon
 Ye, Spirit, 'till ye seem no more confined
 In bodily durance; but sublimed!—shall find
 Our spirits what they seek in thee? Oh, haste!
 We soon shall all your wondrous power unwind.
 To-night we shall a noble banquet taste—
 And shall Rachel be true to all our thought has faced?

* * * * *

Then the approach to Boston! Grandly rose
 In the noon sunlight modern Athens' towers,
 As o'er the water swift the flying cars
 Sped on their way, to make the city ours:

And nearer, nearer to the glittering shores
 Each moment brought us ;—as the iron-horse
 On thunder'd !—Ere upon our future lowers
 Its undimm'd grandeur, gladly would our course
 We stay, now,—lengthening this, ere all her tongues
 discourse !

* * * *

We see Her !—and she looketh like to those
 Spirits of the Inferno,—darkly bright !
 Strangely upon our eyes her looks disclose—
 Not like a peerless angel of the light,—
 But in intense and thunderous splendors dight :—
 Her voice, like her, demoniacal, inspired,
 Its full and thrilling music pours—our sight
 Never beheld her semblance ;—she, attired
 In more than human Woe, with seraph's Force is fired.

Thou flaming Spirit ! Dante, did'st thou see
 This soul a-burning in thy destin'd hell ?
 And if so, those red tortures bore not she
 Defiantly, as though she them could quell ?
 Oh, Voice ! thy tones must aye in memory dwell—
 Rich, vibrant, even in thy wan despair :
 All still'd was my aw'd spirit's restless swell
 At sight of throes that held her fainting there
 With agony—and yet with might her triumph could
 declare

To those who watch'd !—All-potent, glorious thing
 Toss'd on the waves of turbid torture, where
 Thy splendor doth baleful radiance fling,
 What art thou ? creature of the boundless air ?
 Disbodied soul, from Tartarus ? Dost bear
 Message of fateful torment to thy foes ?
 Thou art a presence ! thou that movest there—
 Strange, self-contain'd, perfect in high self-poise
 Which swiftest might and noiseless majesty yet shews !

No mortal thou, thus to contend with woe,
 With rage of Titaness and goddess mien—
 Nor sink o'erwhelmed—but only stronger grow
 "Close-lock'd in strife," such as ne'er yet was seen!
 Where hast thou, oh unutterable, been
 To buy this power? Why art thou not o'ercome
 In this thy last extremity? The keen
 Shafts of the giant, Death, at last consume
 Thy wondrous strength, and so thou meet'st thy
 doom!*

* * * *

Our wanderer had a sister, priceless gift!—
 Whom he ne'er wearied thinking on—so high
 The theme it help'd his darker soul to lift
 From the abyss of doubt, despondency—
 So lofty was her nature's poetry:
 And when removed still she smiled as erst,—
 In spirit she to him was ever nigh:
 Her calm enthusiasm 'mid the worst
 Of earth's dark ills alone made his life blest, not curst!

* * * *

Great God! what might not Poesy and Truth
 Do for those who have ever lov'd them here:
 Might they not turn aside the fearful ruth
 Of disappointment,—worldliness, that sear?—
 That, acting on a fine-strung spirit, doth
 Make havoc often 'till it can but fear—
 Breaking its harmonies with discords rude
 And changing the soul's light to saddest mood!

Were I but sure that heaven's divinest gift,
 The gift of Poesy, were mine, I'd do
 Deeds with my pen that the worn soul should lift—
 Bear it serenely thro' the far-off blue,

* I saw Rachel in the Fall of 1855, in "Adrienne Lecouvreur."

Where shapes majestic throng with each his gift,
 Where all the virtues join in hymning new;
 Where noble powers to harmony attune,
 And the soul basketh in divinest noon!

* * * * *

There, forms immortal paly round me shone*
 In silent grandeur, as I walk'd among
 Gods, Graces, Heroes;—or glanc'd down upon
 The Laocoon and Children, vainly wrung
 In matchless agony; to fury stung
 The stone cries out†—and watching hearts doth tear
 To cry out too:—or with a look upflung
 From gazing there, saw Raphael with his fair,
 Pale, sad madonna brow, that calms the very air!

But grandest tower forms cast from masterful
 Originals, that early art had hew'd;
 The full, free outline and concenter'd soul;—
 As if to see what artist's power could
 Achieve—for though earth-burden'd, they yet would
 Their heavenly essence for all time enshrine,
 In forms struck out in their inspired mood:
 Symbolic of an energy divine,
 In one embodied blaze of genius do they shine!

Cluster'd in life serene, and strong, and high,
 How multiple their various looks appear!
 Some on the wings of unbound ecstasy,
 Some absolutest grace of grief do wear:

* In this extract reference is made to the collection of marbles in the Boston Athenæum, which I visited in the summer of 1855.

† This language, of course, is figurative. I allude only to the agonized expression of the group; not to any representation of vocal protest in the figures.

Those copied from the Attic Genius rear
Their godlike fronts, and proudly still proclaim
Beside the lesser glories them group'd near,
Phidias yet unsurpass'd, his might the same—
Their own Greece first and best entitled to the name!

Summer of 1856.

THE POET AND THE CAVILLER.

A FRAGMENT.

CAVILLER.

DID you not fear sometimes you were deceiv'd,
That all your fancied power might be a dream?

POET.

As well might question Ocean's separate tides,
Or lava veins of Etna of their power,—
Or, better still, the pregnant universe :
I tell you who has Reason for his guide
And her twin sister, she whom men do call
Imagination,—who from his youth up
To early manhood, clear-ey'd conscience has
Own'd for his friend—can have small dearth or doubt :
While the native powers of his soul remain
What they are aye, and Nature is unchang'd,
I tell you Inspiration cannot fail
To a poetic soul—it doubt its gifts.

CAVILLER.

So you work'd boldly, did you, and assur'd ?

POET.

So I work'd, my brother, and enfolding
All my Reason's wealth in garb of rhyme,
Twining in Imagination's flowers
Sweet and pure as joys of summer-time ;—

I did by my riant strength and beauty
Strike even dull men with a strange surprise ;
And the glory of my poems clearly
Manifested was to dimmest eyes.

For I told of wonders earth is brewing ;
For I analyzed man's various mind ;
For I made more plain divinest wisdom,
'Till I seer and prophet left behind.

Oh, while Nature holds this grandeur, can I
Droop despondent ? The soaring spirit quail ?
While my soul, too, is so full of visions,
Shall I doubt ? Shall Inspiration fail ?

No, my friend, no poet doubts his power,
Though the world may scorn or pass him by :
He is happier when he looks the saddest
Than all other men—as now am I.

Can he help but feel his mission glorious ?
God has crown'd him king among mankind :
Noble gifts he knows shall one day triumph,
And his memory by men be shrined.

October, 1858.

SONNETS.

I.

CHILDHOOD.

EARTH knew no dimness then, for every tree
Was orb'd and laden with poetic thought :
Through all my being lively Wonder wrought,
Giving broad vision to my infancy :
The heavens lean'd o'er me in benignity
And the far distant hills wore Beulah's calm :
Nature's airs were all freshness, spice, and balm.
A rose was then a mystery to me—
A glory compass'd each fair petal spread
Forth to my childish gaze ; from placid mood
My large-conceiving soul, with beauty fed
Was stirr'd to ecstasy ! Some souls have stood
Circled about with poems in their youth
As earth is with the stars, and God with Truth.

———, 1856.

II.

THE POET'S CROWN.

CROWN'ST thou the Poet ?—think'st to pleasure him
By binding of bay leaves around his brow
Who the grand bliss of seeing God doth know,
Who asks of earth no boon, but, not to dim
His inspiration by its cruel whim ?
Think better of it, World—since Tasso died
Unhonor'd so (if honor't be) : beside
Such poet's brow the laurel leaf would seem

Lustreless—and fade only on its wide
 And white dominion :—while the souls would say,
 The disembodied ones on the other side
 Leaning from out th' eternal upper Day,
 "Attempt it not, Presumptuous—but obey !
 This poet God shall crown—cast down your bay !"
March, 1858.

III.

NATURE'S SYMPATHY.

SINCE Pain's disc sank beneath Joy's horizon
 All nature seems transfigur'd and elate—
 To glow in calm : not storm-vex'd, passionate ;
 And with the utterest sympathizing, on
 To swell the volume of my spirit's song !
 The wind in forest trees new rhythms wakes,
 With grander music than to Grief it makes,
 Sweeping in blissful cadences along.
 The Spring's sweet showers mildly vocal grow,
 Wanting their minors ; and the Summers smile
 Broader, with halcyon peace, o'er harvest toil ;
 Autumn is glorious ; through her requiems flow
 Telling of resurrection ;—Winter e'en
 Is *haloed* death—soon to arise in Spring.

August 25, 1858.

IV.

AUTUMN.

HAZE-CROWN'D, the empurpled hills soft-outlin'd rose
 In fair perspective—while a noble sweep
 Of golden fields met them in forward leap :
 In sunset glory all the landscape glows :

Grand dignity, and ripeness, and repose
The scene doth own,—and too, a purpose deep
As is God's thought : He working here shall reap
In earth's abundance, and man's sweet outflows
Of love and praise His harvest : so I mused,
As walk'd I with my friend and look'd abroad
Upon the Autumn scenery ; where diffused
In matchless contrast, colors countless show'd
Both soft and vivid—in the beech's spread
Of noble foliage,—in the oak's grand head.

V.

AUTUMN (CONTINUED.)

CONCENTER'D hues form'd rainbows round the brows
Of forest giants, who lift heavenward
Their steadfast gaze : that sky they're yearning toward
Like greatest souls :—let their calm striving rouse
Humanity deeds heroic to espouse ;
Man from his sad indifference into mood
Of noble nature : so these trees have stood
From infancy aspiring : “ Ephraim knows
This life,” thought I, and fac'd him : solemnly
Yet placidly he gaz'd as we did walk,
In all his tranquil mien the dignity
Of sacred Worth : so too my kinsman's talk
The high serenity of Virtue does
Inspire :—a friend my life shall never lose.

VI.

AUTUMN (CONTINUED.)

OH, far blue hills, how dim and grand ye shew'd,
Waking strong yearnings in my beating breast—
Would that I might obey your high behest,
And, passing swift and calm all barriers, could
Repose amid your mighty glooms, which would
Embosom me in vastest solitude
And utterest silence! Your so royal mood
My soul would taste! How eagerly he rode!
The master, yonder, in the field—divines
My spirit suddenly his errand—home
Returning, sees he a girl who stands and twines
The blue corn-flowers whose leaves of dewy bloom
Must crown the sheaf this eve—keen-ey'd, he sees
Her sweeter yet than they for ministries.

September, 1858.

VII.

ON SEEING ROSA BONHEUR'S "ATTELAGE
NIVERNAIS."

WHAT vig'rous life, what various mood is here!
The long-lin'd oxen (a right royal row
Conceivèd royally) move onward slow:
Concentrated the sweetness of the year
Seems to glow over them,—yet doth appear
In all the halcyon distance. Every eye
In th' steady train, patient, or stubbornly
Aroused—doth show the beast's strong nature clear:

These long do us detain—and the farmer, who,
Infected with the influence of the hour,
Half guides and half reposes 'gainst his plow.
Oh, woman ! thine is the majestic Power—
Thine the poetic soul, unerring eye
Of Genius—thus thy work is masterly.

September 15, 1858.

VIII.

ON A BETROTHAL.

COME roses, flush more consciously, and ye
Pure petall'd lilies, sweetest smells forth give !
Why speak I thus ? Why bid I ye to live
A vivider life ? Why would my spirit see
Now only Beauty, Joy, and Fragrancy ?
A lady loves ! Therefore oh, roses, blush
A livelier crimson ; and in perfect hush
Let all the lilies drooped placidly
Raise their blanch'd pureness ! She who loveth flowers,
More like to them than aught, should cheer have won
And sympathy from them, now when the hours
Crown her so gloriously with life's noblest crown :
She is belov'd and loves : oh, Passion flower
Thou may'st be emblem of this perfect hour !

August, 1858.

IX.

PATIENCE.

COME, godlike guest, not unknown to that One
Who erewhile suffer'd that we might rejoice :
Come, make the divine calmness of thy voice
To drown this rush and roar which leaveth none

Of us who toil a place to rest upon.
We've prov'd thee and would prove thee yet again :
Come, take the sting forever from our pain :
Look through, oh, Saint, as thou before hast done,
What racks us : breathe into the tempest peace.
And upon memory thy smile diffuse ;
That the long agonies of past days lose
Their fiery aspects : and then do not cease
Thy ministrations 'till thy steady light
Haloing the Past, illumine the Future's night !

X.

PATIENCE (CONTINUED.)

WE welcome thee, strong Angel ! Take the place
Of Hope, who cheer'd the days now pass'd away—
Spreading her rainbow hues about our way—
Thou art the best ; thou wear'st the holiest grace !
We worship the calm waiting of thy face :
Speak to our aching hearts ! Our temple's pain
Cool into quiet : let each burning vein
With more sereneness carry on life's race :
Yes, be our friend !—let blest tranquillity,
Belov'd of every sage, aspiring soul,
Be ours amid the roaring, surging sea
Of this world's action : while the billows roll
Let us, sweet Patience, stem their rage with Thee !
We know thou can'st support us and console !

July, 26, 1858.

XI.

ALCESTIS.

A SOLEMN stillness broods o'er earth and skies :
Another martyr to the loftiest—Love—
To-day shall see ; and yet they do not move—
Those great-brow'd gods behold her with calm eyes !
(So shall they look when noble Arria dies.)
Die, woman ! Ages shall exalt thy name :
Set in the incense of a sacred fame
Thou'lt live in memory of the heroic, wise !
Aloft Parnassus towers—no olive there
Upon its side, nor pomegranate's bloom
Pales in compassion for thine early doom,—
Greece only looks more passionately fair :
But that grand love long'd for so vainly here,
Afar transfigures thee in Passion clear !

XII.

ALCESTIS (CONTINUED.)

THE sea rolls smooth on Grecian shores as day
Dies. Did Alcestis go to meet her fate ?
Did the heart in her grasp her purpose great ?
Yes !—while the gods smil'd on nor did gainsay.
(O'er the supremest, fiercest lightnings play.)
O'er the far sky the purple hills expand :
Near glows Parnassus, towering o'er the land !
No pitying touch doth on its bright front lay.

Thou died'st : and then thy life was given again.
Ah, glorious spirit ! suffering to thee
Has brought the boon of Immortality !
Embalm'd thy memory—this divinest pain—
Bequeath'd thy praises to all thoughtful men—
Made thy high heroism thy diadem !

August, 1858.

XIII.

THE POET'S SENSE OF MISCONCEPTION.

WHEN the soul's grand Ideal outlin'd plain
Perfectly fair, and in its mood divine,
Transcendent, fit for heaven's crystalline
Glow's broad upon the vision of the brain—
Then the controlling might of this world's pain,
Often does not fall powerless as it should
On such a consummation : rather would
The man who has conceived divinely, deign
To embrace grim Death oft-times than feel the stings
Of weaker brothers who see not his crown ;—
Love not the soul which wider than theirs flings
Immortal shapes forth—but oblivious frown
At the sad inspiration of his youth—
Decrying Genius,—seek to sneer down Truth.

——, 1858.

XIV.

TO MY MOTHER.

MOTHER, but fifty years thy life doth own,
And yet thou in sweet wisdom art supreme.
A pure, heroic element doth seem
Thy virtue's quietness to brighter crown,
And set thee on an absoluter throne

Than many women attain to : thou the dream
Of my rapt childhood realized. Deem
My first sight low thou did'st not—thou alone
Pointed the noblest heights out to my youth :
Divinely pitiful to infancy
Thou taught'st me to discern the highest truth—
Until I too as clear as thou could'st see :
And now, Belov'd, my poet soul would pay
Such grateful tribute to thee as it may !

October 5, 1858.

XV.

MEMORY.

THEE, sacred Memory, shall I revere
As long as I soul's riches have for dower :
Thou on whom all things grave themselves—a Power
Coeval with our nature's life : oh, hear
Her strong, clear-utter'd tones, thou student ! bear
Her images of Highest things with thee—
Absorb them with thy Soul's eye perfectly,
And they'll enrich thy life for many a year ;
Still to recur again, when at the Gate
Of Death and Heaven thou stand'st and tremblest
There they'll await to make thy passage blest :
Premonitory records in this state
Of what in Archetypal glory there thou'lt see
Perfectly, clad in Immortality.

———, 1857.

XVI.

ADDRESSED TO ELLIS BELL'S SOUL:

ON READING HER POEM OF "THE PRISONER."

STRONG essence, where art thou, whom this world's
pain,
Baptiz'd so awfully?—to whom each beam
Of nature's shows fraught with thy gloom did seem?
Thy martyrdom has brought thee heavenly gain;
And thou no more dost watch the season's wane
With that grand, piercing wistfulness afar
As though all joy thy woe's sublime would mar.
Thou ne'er shalt taste such misery again,
Thou who discern'dst so clear thou could'st not smile:
Thou for whom anguish liv'd and hope was dead.
How doth thy God reward thy long, lone toil?
And what dost thou inherit in its stead?
Thou for the flaming crown of Earth's Despair
The Heavenly, Immortal one dost wear.

October, 1858.

XVII.

GOETHE.

Most kingly seer! in whose great luminous brain
The Old World wisdom found a dwelling-place;
And yet where still remained ample space
For all that had been born through later pain,—
Thou who did'st search all ages—for thy gain
Gathering their fruits: thou seeing our disgrace
Then wrought'st our cure: thou with thy godlike face
In which no trace was found of dark disdain,

Did'st look with sympathy upon world's Woe:
In thee was found salvation for the Time:
For thou, around whose Alpine brow did glow
So grand a halo, sending forth sublime
Divergent splendors,—did aforesaid know
Faust's mad unrest, and Werter's fiery gloom.

October 29, 1858.

XVIII.

MUSIC.

OH, Realm through which great Mozart's soul-wings
soar'd

Untiring; while swift inspirations came
Of during Sounds over his soul aflame
With power; and thunderous melodies were pour'd
To cheer him who all godlike things ador'd.—
Thy grandeur colored Beethoven's dream;
Seraphic hymnings did pervading seem
To mould his life. Thou, music, wert the lord
Of divine Consuelo's soul, which saw
The majesty of thy vast prodigies
And learn'd the noble broadness of thy law:
Earnest, enraptur'd, yet serene. Who sees
Through clouds of prejudice and poisonous lies
George Sand, thee in thy heroine, is wise.

XIX.

MUSIC (CONTINUED.)

FOR she thy nature's incarnation is :
And yet inferior in her noble scope
Of soul to thee, who'rt mightier. Thy hope
Is crown'd immortally. We realize
In her the vast octave of thy sympathies :
In Consuelo's Conscience which doth cope
With her Imagination,—the telescope
We see thy nature through, and yet our eyes
Behold thee greater than thy best implies.
Some mighty ones through hideous woes have seen
(Handel and Hadyn music's harmonies
Read clear, interpreting for earth :) a screen
So thick of angel faces orbiting them
As almost to world-usage to be dumb.

September 21, 1858.

XX.

MUSIC (CONTINUED.)

OH, universal Power ! Souls might float
On thy grand rhythms aye, without a shore :
Great Goethe knew thee—often did adore
Thy vastness, lapping his soul in remote
And divine harmonies too high to suit
Most souls : more fit for heavenly men to sing
Who orb the Throne of the Almighty King
Although they cannot see Him whose gaze smote

For myriad Virtues ; which encompass Him
 And seraphs and archangels, and the throng
 Of cherub faces flash'd between, among
 Higher Radiances : yet thy ceaseless hymn ;
 Keeping time with the music of the spheres ;
 And still discern what soul a Goethe wears.

 XXI.

MUSIC (CONCLUDED.)

There's not the smallest orb, which thou behold'st
 But in his motion like an angel sings,
 Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins :
 Such harmony is in immortal souls.—

Merchant of Venice, Act V., Scene I.

Oh, Melody, Rhythm, souls are but the notes
 That swim the luminous gulf Eternity :
 Which voiceless is but for thy mystery :
 From kine's sweet-cadenc'd low, on earth, which floats
 O'er poet's ear at morn and eve, to what throats
 Of seraphs sound—and worlds perhaps the keys
 On which thou try'st thy lesser harmonies—
 Thou fillest all things ! 'mid thy rapturous notes
 The Poet finds his heaven ; and does discern
 From deeps lying below tears, and earth's dark curse,
 The Harmonies which orb the Universe !
 He through thy ministries tardy fame doth earn :
 Sadness and Passion, Triumph, Ecstasy,
 May all oh, Music, find a voice in thee !

September 24, 1858.

XXII.

ON SEEING THE PORTRAIT OF RAPHAEL (BY
HIMSELF) IN THE MUNICH GALLERY.

OH, noble relic ! Genius here is shown
On all thy forehead's placid majesty ;
In thy head's royal turn ;—thy conscious eye,
Where the demoniacal soul doth own
Its Power ; and says : " I sit upon the throne
Of my large nature's grand supremacy
Alone—and only Buonarroti see
Above me : my wide vision dares the noon
Of God's sweet mysteries, to portray them here :
All nature my vast Insight pierces keen :
My ken anticipates Heaven's glories clear,
To mirror their divineness forth again
For earth's transc'd gaze and raptest seraph's smile,
Which is the high reward of all my toil."

September 20, 1858.

XXIII.

H O M E R.

THOU hast been sought by many a sovereign soul :
Werter's unrest could tolerate but thee ;
His Author doubtless knew thee oft to be
The only Harmony fit to control
His nature's forces : Homer's song might roll
Its glorious action, its benignant calm
Over such soul to grand results : no qualm
(All its tempestuous vastness could console

Olympian splendors borne on rhythmic balm)
Of weakness, to impair reciprocity
In Goethe's manhood:—E'en when taught of Thee
He could look up undazzled: while the "psalm"
Of his "life" flow'd more smooth, less thunderously
At sight of thy supreme Serenity.

XXIV.

HOMER (CONTINUED.)

HOMER, who shew'st us gods and godlike life!
"If thou art made," Heeren might well ask thee
In the vast joy of immortality—
Where thou hast scope at last for what was rife
In thy great Being,—Power without its strife—
"Happier to look earthward on who drew
Large inspiration from thy source!" 'Tis true:
That Bliss to us like eastern hieroglyph
Such sight must lend beams which can paint no
rhyme.

Who nourish'd Plato, Milton, Pope inspir'd?
Who suckled Dante and who Goethe fir'd,
But thou, sublimest Poet of all Time?
Troilus and Cressid Shakspeare did woo
From thee,—thee Eschylus and Virgil knew.

XXV.

HOMER (CONCLUDED.)

OH, from the peerless heights still gaze below,
Thou who hold'st all we know of strength, Repose !
Incline thy mighty brow toward where it flows
This restless life—for Action all too low,
Too shallow thy rapt, noble Calm to know;—
For e'en among us there are two or three
Who, Poet, yet reck of these and of Thee :
This age, cold to heroic Glory's glow
Homer in verse still unapproach'd doth own ;
Praise Browning, Sand, Tennyson doth accord ;
Feels noble Thackeray's keen satiric sword.
What royal souls vigor and balm have won
From thee, thou mightiest of the sons of men !
Thou who gain'st honor from no poet's pen.

October, 1858.

THE END.

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